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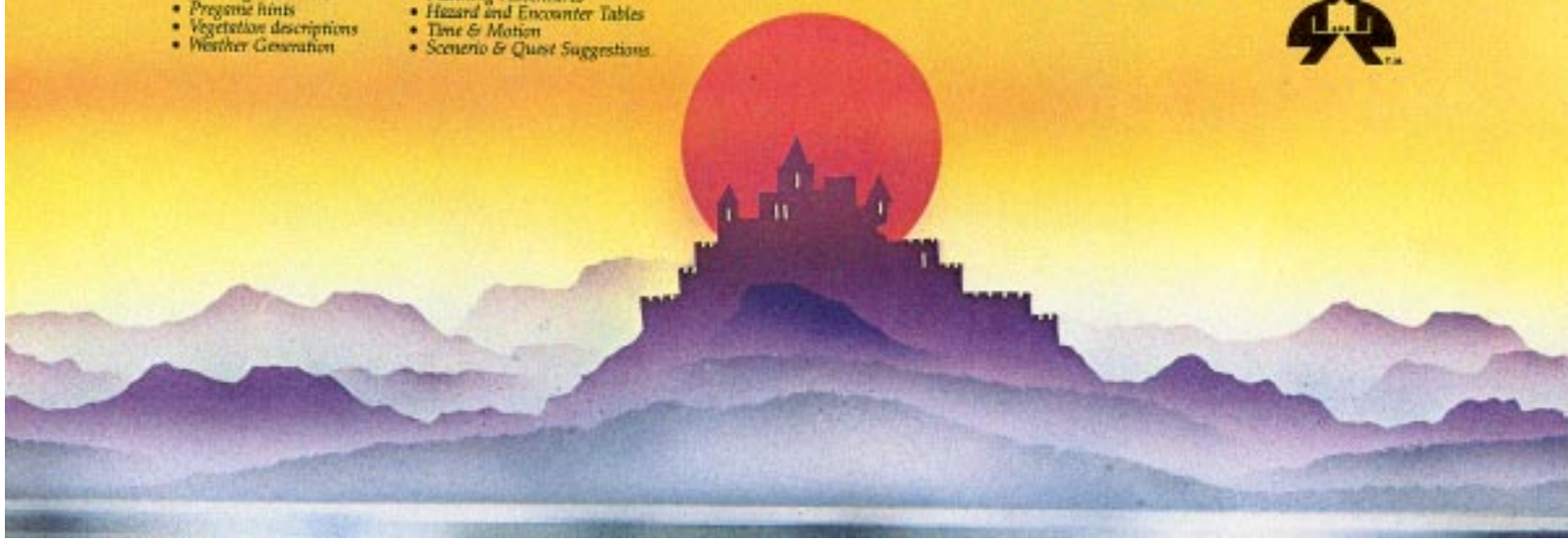
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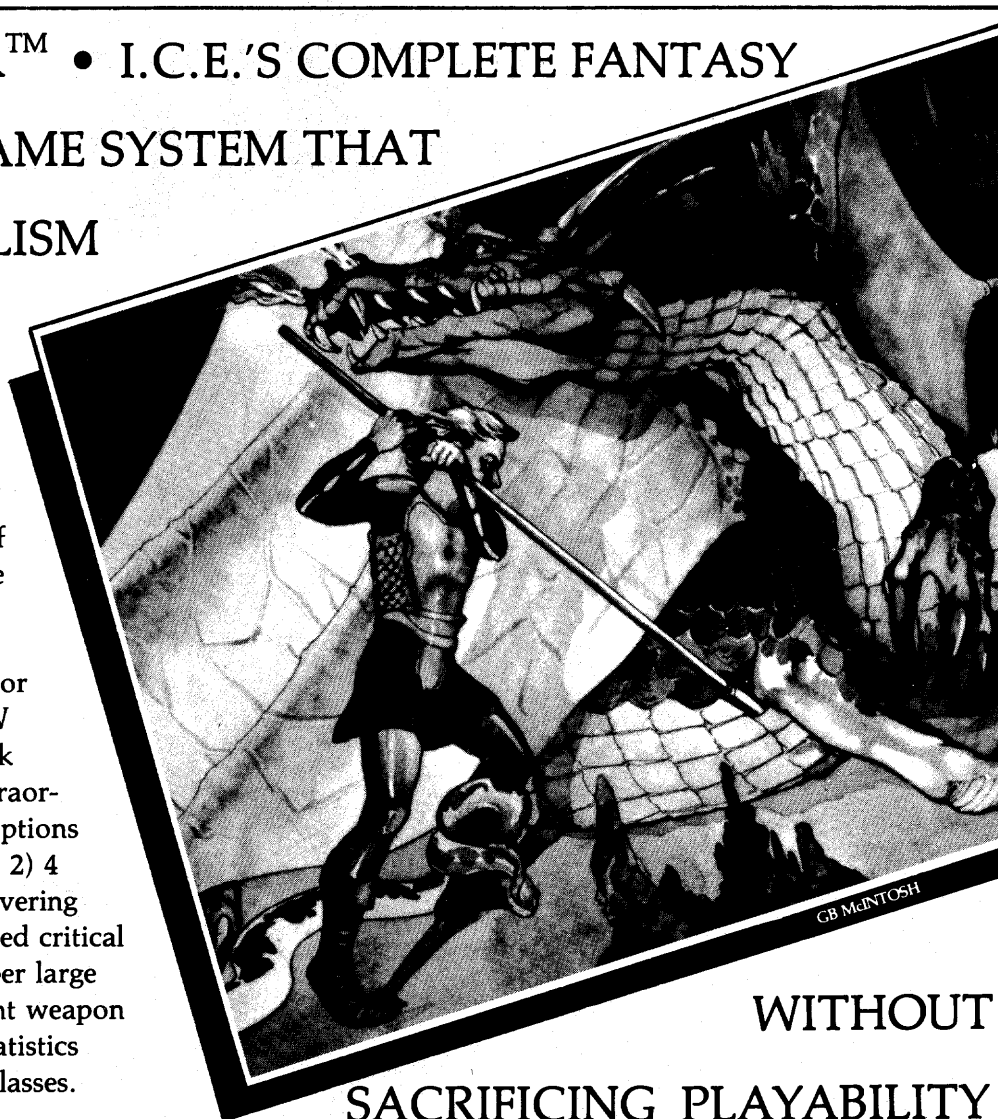
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in the space of six pages*

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DRAGON Magazine (ISSN 0279-6848) is published monthly for a subscription price of \$24 per year by Dragon Publishing, a division of TSR, Inc. The mailing address of Dragon Publishing for all material except subscription orders is P.O. Box 110, Lake Geneva WI 53147.

DRAGON Magazine is available at hobby stores and bookstores throughout the United States and Canada, and through a limited number of overseas outlets. Subscription rates are as follows: \$24 for 12 issues sent to an address in the U.S. or Canada; \$50 U.S. for 12 issues sent via surface mail or \$95 for 12 issues sent via air mail to any other country. All subscription payments must be in advance, and should be sent to Dragon Publishing, P.O. Box 72089, Chicago IL 60690.

A limited quantity of certain back issues of DRAGON Magazine can be purchased from the Dungeon Hobby Shop. (See the list of available issues printed elsewhere in each magazine.) Payment in advance by check or money order must accompany all orders. Payments cannot be made through a credit card, and orders cannot be taken nor merchandise reserved by telephone. Neither an individual customer nor an institution can be billed for a subscription order or a back-issue purchase unless prior arrangements are made.

The issue of expiration for each subscription is printed on the mailing label for each subscriber's copy of the magazine. Changes of address for the delivery of subscriptions must be received at least six weeks prior to the effective date of the change in order to insure uninterrupted delivery.

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Second-class postage paid at Lake Geneva, Wis., and additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Dragon Publishing, P.O. Box 110, Lake Geneva WI 53147. USPS 318-790. ISSN 0279-6848.

Shorter and stronger

If this isn't one of the first places you turn to when a new issue comes out, you may have already noticed that TSR, Inc. has a new name — shorter and more accurate, since TSR is more than a hobby-gaming company. The name change is the most immediately visible effect of several changes the company has undergone lately.

To the limit of this space, here's some information about the changes, mostly expressed in terms of how I think they will affect the audience we reach. For a specific answer to that, see the notice across the bottom of page 4: *Ares™* magazine and DRAGON® magazine are going to stay out of each other's turf from now on, giving the readers of each magazine more of what they read it for.

I mention that change here as an example of what has happened, sometimes on a much larger scale, within TSR, Inc. The company has reorganized, reassessed its position and its future, and has taken some steps to solidify its future as a company and insure the future satisfaction of the customers we serve.

TSR, Inc., now has only six executive divisions instead of twelve. Among the alterations were the consolidation of the GNW craft line into Dragon Publishing, and the melding of the Toy Division into the Games Division.

Both of those changes have at least one thing in common: Each new division is composed of facets of the company that are trying to attract the same audience. It makes perfect sense for them to be working as closely together as possible,

The changes at TSR were made to increase productivity, which is designed to result in (among other things) a more profitable company. Let's not kid ourselves: Everybody wants to make money, and businesses are no exception.

But, increasing TSR's productivity — making it an even stronger company than it was already — will ultimately be of visible benefit to our customers. I know very little about big business, but I do know that productive, healthy companies have more — and happier — customers than those that aren't so healthy. (I've worked for unhealthy companies before.)

To return to the example, we don't expect everyone to appreciate our *Ares-DRAGON* decision; it's trite, but all too true that you simply can't please everybody. We hope that most of you will understand, and that you'll end up being more frequently pleased, and better served, by what Dragon Publishing and TSR have to offer in the years to come.



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Months ago, in a fit of what we call long-range planning, we decided that issue #76 would be a great time to publish an updated index. Within days after that decision was made, one Mr. Gyga politely inquired about whether we were considering doing an index. Aw, sure, I said, we're already planning on it for the August issue.

Well, telling the big guy that you're going to do something is the world's best incentive. The index that lots of you have asked for is finished on time, thanks to that confident promise I made last winter and to the efforts of the other people credited at the bottom of page 46. Use it, and enjoy it.

Something else that makes this issue special is tucked 'way back on pages 87 and 88 — the final two pages in the current episode of the saga of Wormy. An ending . . . followed immediately by a new beginning: Issue #77 will contain the first installment of a new Wormy adventure, and Tramp will be making pages as long as his markers and his imagination don't dry up — neither of which is liable to happen.

We've been scolded several times in the last few months for not giving proper recognition to our cover artists. So, okay, we can take a few hints. . . . The striking painting adorning this issue is "The Thing From the Pit" by Clyde Caldwell. It's the seventh example of his work we've printed, and by no means the last. (I have another one behind the chair in my office, but don't tell anybody.) And I expect to see more work out of Clyde, even though he has plenty to do already in his new job on the TSR artist staff.

The beholder is so hard to pin down that we sent two of our best writers, Roger Moore and Ed Greenwood, on a quest for the inside story. The next article in our "ecology" series examines the Eye Tyrant like it's never been looked at before.

In the Finishing What We Started Dept., inside you'll find part II of Ed's description of "The Nine Hells," completing a plane-by-plane tour and adding lots of information on rule changes that apply when a party is adventuring in the devils' domain.

If your player characters ever need a really evil reason for being good, put them up against Len Lakofka's death master NPC for the AD&D™ game, described in *Leomund's Tiny Hut*. Purists should note that Mr. Gyga had a look at this, and made some basic suggestions which were incorporated into the text — but no, that doesn't make it official.

As usual, we're out of space sooner than superlatives. From the first letter to the last laugh, enjoy. — KM



Program response

Dear Editor:

I enjoy reading your magazine, and have come to expect high quality from it. However, with issue #74 my admiration was lost. The [computer] program was atrocious.

In the first place, on any Commodore computer, the user will get a syntax error. The program uses the variable ST\$, which is illegal due to its use as an abbreviated command. Anyone using a Commodore computer should change the string name to SV\$.

Second, this program wastes a lot of space. Lines 1360-1460 are useless. And instead of exchanging ZZ with an ability, change to this method, which works just as well and faster:

[Program details deleted]

Third, there is no way to print this out. A simple addition of the following lines will accomplish this:

[Program details deleted]

Last, but by no means least, this program encompasses only Basic D&D. I have written a program that is a little longer, but encompasses 14 classes of AD&D and with 10 extra lines can create random characters.

Larry Melvin
Ledyard, Conn.

We got lots of letters about the program in #74. We heard from owners of different machines about how to make the program work on their kind of computer. We heard from people with ideas on how to rewrite lines or small sections of the program to use memory space more efficiently. We learned a lot about what to do and what not to do when we print program listings from now on.

But there are some things we can't do much about. We can't print multiple variations of programs to satisfy the quirks of each computer's version of BASIC. We aren't a full-fledged home-computer magazine, we don't intend to be, and we can't sacrifice the space that multiple listings would take up. We assume that anyone who knows how to talk to his computer also knows how to translate a program if it's in a version of BASIC his machine doesn't use.

Many people took us to task for printing such a lousy character-generation program for the AD&D™ game. Well, we did and we didn't. The program was for the D&D® rule system, not the AD&D game. (It sure would be a lousy AD&D program if you used it that way.) We're still keeping a light in the window for the definitive AD&D character generator, hoping it'll show up one of these days.

We look for programs that are written as efficiently and concisely as possible. On a practical level, we've given up waiting for perfect programs to come our way; we don't doubt that one day we'll receive a program that can't be improved upon, but we (and many of you) weren't willing to wait any longer for the magazine to start printing reader-submitted

programs. "Dungeon Master's Personnel Service" is not perfect — and I thank those of you who showed us ways to clean up the syntax — but we think it was one of the best among the submissions we had received at the time it was accepted. We'll get better as we publish more programs, and we'll keep looking and striving for perfection. In the meantime, keep those subscriptions logged on. — KM

Language lapses

Dear Editor:

I was pleased to find the two articles on languages in issue #75. When I began to read the first one, however, my enthusiasm lagged. One reason for this was the passage: "... It may be no coincidence that ancient Rome, an aggressive, expansionist society, spoke Latin by putting the verb first. The position of the word denoting and describing action shows clearly the importance the Romans placed on action."

This is not only illogical, but also incorrect. In Latin there is no standard word order. Poets who wrote in Latin did so not by using rhyming patterns, but often by devising new ways in which to arrange the words in the sentence. Furthermore, as a Latin scholar, I can say that although there is no standard word order, verbs often come at the end of sentences.

I find the notion that culture shapes language to be absurd. ("Their harsh, savage nature will further lead orcs to use mostly harsh, guttural sounds.") I find that to be an ill-drawn conclusion. Would a society of artistic, peaceful people necessarily, then, use words with pleasing sounds and soft consonants? I think not.

Also, even though the author describes orcs as slow-witted beasts (which they are, as far as I have heard), their language would not necessarily be as unimaginative as it is presented. From what I can tell about Common Orcish, there are no adjective clauses, imperatives, and many ingredients of most languages.

Ben Grossblatt
Chevy Chase, Md.

Gray's reply

Dear Editor:

Issue #75 of DRAGON Magazine contained a caustic letter from Jon Clemens, accusing me of creating information and including gross inaccuracies in my short review of his game, *Universe II*. After reading the letter, I called Mr. Clemens and found him to be very friendly and knowledgeable. We reached an understanding on two points: I didn't create any information, and I had incredibly bad luck playing his game.

As Mr. Clemens pointed out, the address printed for his company was two years old and

no longer correct. He admitted to me that he had not advertised the game for several years, since it was full. I didn't see any ads for his newer games until after the article had gone into print, so there was no way I could have known ahead of time that the address had changed.

He stated in his letter that I had such limited experience with the game I felt I had to create information. That statement simply isn't true. I played the game for six months; isn't that long enough to decide whether a game is fun or dull?

Mr. Clemens' letter said that ships need no fuel, but the article used that term: According to the rules, "The central power source on each starship can supply a maximum of five units of power per time period. It must be apportioned . . . to two functions: propulsion and combat strength." This source of power is what I referred to as fuel. Perhaps I should have used the term "power" — but I didn't make up the information.

He says there is no such device as an "alien escape pod" that can be built. To show that this *was* the term expressed to me, and that I was correct in referring to it in my article, here's a part of my turn sheet for Turn #8:

AT THE END OF THIS TIME PERIOD YOUR
STARSHIP WAS IN

QUADRANT: IV
SECTOR: AF20

SHUTTLE #1

YOUR SHUTTLE CREW DISCOVERED THE
WRECKAGE OF AN ALIEN ESCAPE POD.
IN IT THEY FOUND A DIAGRAM OF SOME FORM
OF EQUIPMENT.
THE FUNCTION PERFORMED BY THE
EQUIPMENT IS UNKNOWN.

I had trouble finding out what this alien gizmo is or does. On Turn #10, I asked, "How will I ever find out what the alien escape pod does or how it works?" The reply was that "it functions about the same way as the one built into your ship." Is it any wonder that I quit playing this frustrating game?

Next, Mr. Clemens reveals that there are a range of very diversified activities in the game. However, they are not mentioned in the rules. After four months, all I could do was ask on Turn #8, "Is there anything else besides ships, planets, and asteroids?"

Now, an update: Mr. Clemens told me that the game has been expanded greatly since I played. Since most of the niceties of the game are not mentioned in the rules, he was free to add to and improve his design over the past few years. Now that he has let the cat out of the bag (to some extent) in his letter, all of us know more about the possibilities in *Universe II* and *Universe III*.

This whole situation brings an important issue to light. The information that was available to me as a *player* is always a great deal less than the information I could get as a *reviewer* of play-by-mail games. Acting as a *player*, it would be very hard to give a fair and accurate review of a game unless I had played it for years. But on the other hand, playing as a *reviewer* allows me to know things that other *players* wouldn't get that easily. I think readers are better served by being told as much as possible, if what they read entices them to get involved. I've always been careful not to give away any secrets or otherwise spoil the game for any readers who decide to play.

Michael Gray
Williams Bay, Wis.

Ad observations

Dear Editor:

How can you justify wasting 32 pages [in issue #74] on a brochure for a convention which most of your readers will not attend? This booklet should have been mailed to interested parties, not published in your magazine.

William C. Jerome
Rennselaer, N.Y.

Dear Dragon:

Lately I am noticing the increased use of advertisements [in the magazine]. In issue #74 I counted 68 ads, not including the GEN CON special. Could you not reduce this number?

Geof McKinney
Rye, Colo.

First, the convention brochure didn't "waste" any space, because readers still got a full-sized magazine in addition to that supplement.

Second, we cannot (and wouldn't if we could) cut down the amount of space devoted to advertising in any issue of DRAGON® magazine. On the contrary, we want more advertising — and so (we think) should our readers, because the more "paid space" we sell, the more pages we can put between the covers. Our standard page count has just gone up (from 80 to 96) as a direct result of an increase in advertising space requests; some of that "extra" 16 pages, but not nearly all of it, is used to hold those ads. What it boils down to is more reading material — articles and advertisements both — per issue. Is that anything to complain about? — KM

Magazines will split fantasy & SF

In the beginning, there was DRAGON® magazine. Since its inception, it has encompassed the rise of the D&D® game and other role-playing games — including those with science-fiction themes.

Now there's *Ares*™ magazine, a bi-monthly periodical resurrected from the demise of Simulations Publications Inc. *Ares* used to be primarily a simulation map-and-counter gaming magazine, and even now, four issues per year contain complete board games. In addition, every issue has an expansive "Role-Playing Gamer" section dedicated to SF role-playing games.

Originally, *Ares* magazine balanced its content between fantasy and SF. And in the past, DRAGON magazine included science fiction in its pages.

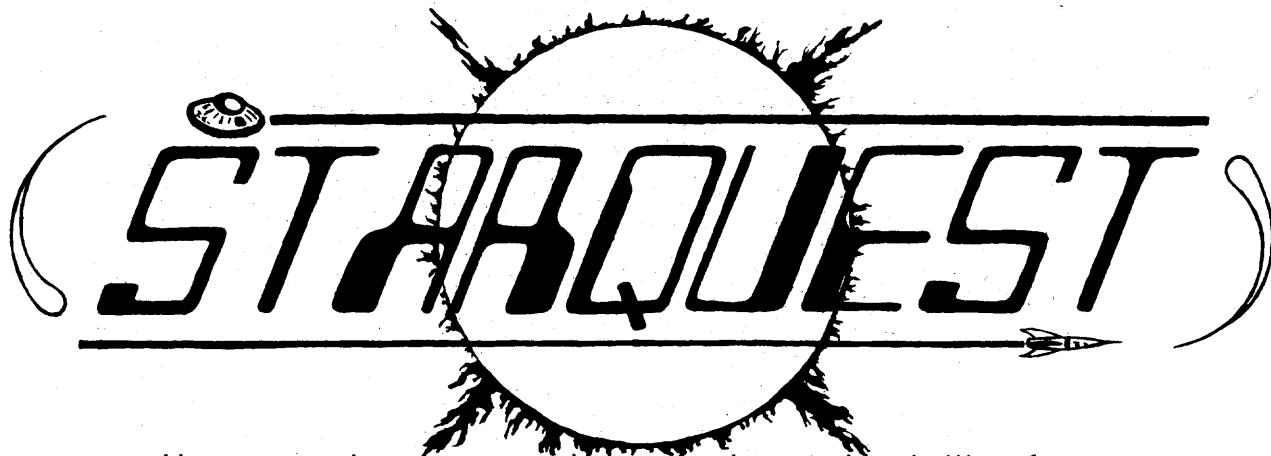
But no more. Both magazines have narrowed and streamlined their focal points. Effective with the next issue of each periodical, the fantasy-related material that was in *Ares* magazine will now appear in DRAGON magazine, and the SF articles and features that formerly appeared in DRAGON magazine will now be showcased between the *Ares* covers.

The realignment means that fans of both genres will receive substantially more material. Fantasy enthusiasts can now get more of what they like inside

DRAGON magazine, and those who favor science fiction will find more pages devoted to that side of gaming in *Ares* magazine than DRAGON magazine was able to provide while at the same time trying to satisfy fantasy fans. Products like the GAMMA WORLD®, STAR FRONTIERS™, and *Traveller*® games have never received the attention they deserved in DRAGON magazine. Now, *Ares* magazine can help correct that long-standing inequity.

Authors and artists would do well to note this change, so they know which magazine to address with materials submitted for evaluation. The staff of DRAGON magazine will forward all SF submissions to the *Ares* staff, and fantasy materials sent to the *Ares* editor's desk will be sent in the opposite direction. (Contributors can reach either magazine by simply writing to Dragon Publishing, P.O. Box 110, Lake Geneva WI 53147.)

We hope that readers of either or both magazines will see the merit in this division of coverage. Dragon Publishing and TSR, Inc., are committed to serving our contributors, our customers, and the readers of our magazines to the best of our ability, and with the satisfaction of our readers uppermost in our minds.



Have you always wanted to experience the thrills of your favorite science fiction books and movies?? HERE'S HOW!!!

You are a Special Agent of the Imperial Government. Using your well equipped one man ship, you've penetrated the group of asteroids you suspect to hide the secret Zershan base. For weeks you've been investigating the mysterious sabotage at nearby Imperial Spaceports, and you're sure that they originate here. Now ... how can you stop their operation without getting yourself blown into sub-atomic particles?!

You're the Captain of a small space freighter. On what should have been a routine landing at Cerinath, your ship is ordered to remain in orbit. In minutes an Imperial Cruiser matches orbits and sends across a boarding team. Shortly, they unearth some hidden contraband drugs. Worse, you had no idea they were on your ship! You've been set up! As you and your four man crew are shuttled over to the Cruiser, you're determined to return to your last port of call and find out what's behind this ... IF you can keep from being locked away in the lowest jail on Cerinath!!

You and your partners go over what seems like the hundredth set of scanning reports. You're trying to locate the daughter of Bradon Harkman, a VERY wealthy industrialist. Her ship was lost in this area, and he hired YOU rather than turn to his own corporate resources because you specialize in this type of thing, and you're GOOD at it! This is the only habitable planet in the sector, tho it remains uncolonized due to the severely lethal life forms native to it. If Harkman's daughter DID get here in a lifepod, finding where it landed will be the EASY part!!

STARQUEST is ECI's new game of interstellar adventure. This is the first game which allows players to experience character level role-playing adventure in a Sci-Fi correspondence game. And just like our other games, you receive response to your moves in a narrative style ... no computer read-out sheets to have to decipher!

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EXTRAS — Like our other games, **STARQUEST** will have its own monthly newsletter to inform you of interesting events happening in the game, and to give you the opportunity to win cash prizes in monthly contests!

If you love adventure, or if you love Science Fiction, then **STARQUEST** is the game for you!
Enter now and in only a few days you'll be living the life of your dreams among the STARS!!!

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The ecology of the Beholder

by Ed Greenwood
and
Roger E. Moore

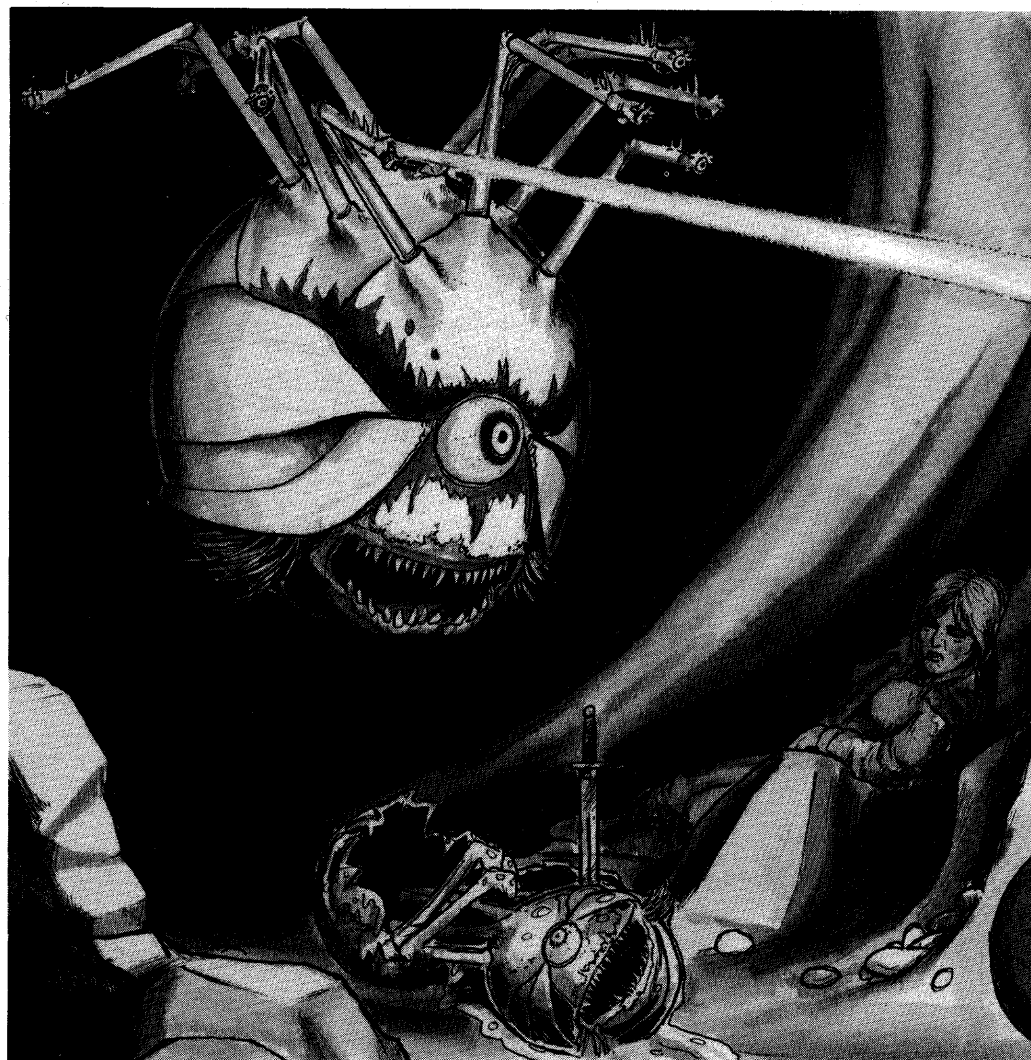
"Many tales are told," began the sage, "of the dreaded eye tyrants." At the mention of this name, the restless students sitting around him in the outdoor amphitheater grew quiet. The sage smiled and continued. "You've listened to stories of these fantastic creatures, seemingly born to the art of destruction; wild tales of battle done with them, of the sorcerous powers of their many eyes, of their rich hoards of treasure. But few have cared to learn much of the habits and nature of these creatures. Know you now that I have studied the beholder for many seasons, and can tell you in truth what was not known before."

The sage paused and looked out at his youthful audience. "Some of you may be thinking about the good it would do to destroy the race of eye tyrants. Some of you may be thinking about the fame it would bring you to slay one, or the wealth it would have hidden away. . . . Well, no harm in dreaming." The sage's gaze fell upon a young boy who looked up at him with unusual intensity; the sage stared back at him, but the boy did not look away.

"Perhaps," he went on, "some of you may actually do battle with one of these monsters, for whatever reason. What I have to tell you may well save you and your companions as well."

The sage looked away from the boy and turned to a blank slate behind him. Producing a piece of chalk, he began sketching a diagram of the beholder with rapid but careful strokes.

"The beholder is shaped like a great sphere, almost the height of a man. The body is covered by several hard plates of chitin which overlap one another slightly, protecting the internal organs. A magical organ called the *levator magnus*, located in the center of the body surrounded by the creature's brain, produces an influence that causes the beholder to float in the air. This allows it to move about slowly, up and down, left or right, forward or back at a slow speed, like that



of a pacing man. No magical spell or device can negate this levitation, though beholders cannot resist the push of great winds; most of them lair underground where they may go as they will, while others move about in desolate, windless areas where few other creatures will go.

"From atop this armored sphere project ten eyestalks, each of which has a limited maneuverability and field of vision. These eyes, however, do more than just see. They are also able to project, instantly and at will, various spell-like powers of awful effect. Flesh may be turned to stone; armor, weapons, skin and bone disintegrated; charms may be projected, and the influence of death magic itself may be brought to bear.

"And there is also an eleventh eye, greater in diameter than the others, set in the midline of the spherical body. This great eye can project an anti-magical ray that negates the use of all spells, whether cast from a device or from the mind and hands. This ray is a faintly visible beam of grayish light, extending out from the eye in a conical shape up to 140 yards from the monster. This cone is one foot across at the eye, and reaches ten feet in diameter at its greatest extent. This beam will focus upon one target at a time, and may be shifted to keep track of a moving

opponent. This beam has proven the downfall of many would-be slayers of an eye tyrant."

The sage tossed the chalk aside and rubbed the dust from his hands. The class was utterly silent.

"The diet of beholders," he continued, "is widely varied; of necessity, of course, since they can easily defeat most creatures, and thus soon exhaust their food supply in any given area. They vastly prefer raw meat, in large quantities, though they may also consume plant matter and small quantities of gravel to aid in digestion. They are omnivores who seem able, given the opportunity, to endlessly gorge themselves. Waste matter and indigestibles like bone they spit out, far enough away from their lairs to avoid betraying the hiding places of their wealth. They seem to prefer the flesh of horses, cattle, and humans."

Turning to the slate again, the sage picked up the chalk and sketched out a triangular shape. "You should all be familiar with the food-chain pyramid; at the bottom are plants, upon which feed the herbivores, upon which feed the carnivores, and so forth. Beholders sit at the top of the pyramid, preying upon all things. Because of their power, however, they must spread out widely to allow one



another food enough to eat, and to avoid competition. It is almost unknown for more than one beholder to be seen at a time, though it is known that they will cooperate with their own kind, and they can speak with each other in their own tongue.

"Though evil, they are prone to lawfulness as well and may take on servant creatures by duress or charm to serve as guardians of treasure, or as guardians of the beholder's personal safety. These servant creatures are also a means of implementing the eye tyrant's plans to carry destruction to all other life it encounters, and accumulate magical treasure. Gargoyles are highly favored for such uses, since they are too stupid and too undisciplined to resist the beholder's demands, and not powerful enough to give their master discomfort and perhaps bring about their annihilation."

The sage paused for a breath, then continued with, "We now come to reproduction." While this topic usually brought smiles and giggles to the faces of the class, now the students watched the sage with complete attention. "Once a year, every beholder lays a clutch of one to four eggs, each about a foot in diameter, by expelling them from the internal organ that produces eggs and spitting the eggs

from its mouth. These eggs are dead-white, spherical, and leathery in texture and appearance. They have a repulsive odor that repels predators, but which unfortunately leads the more dedicated foes of the eye tyrants unerringly to the clutch.

"The laying of eggs is instinctive, but the beholder consciously chooses the site where the eggs will be left — always far from its lair, and usually upon a rocky, desolate height. Such spots have been used by beholders over many centuries, and it is thought that all such creatures remember their birthplaces and return there to lay their eggs. After being laid, the eggs will hatch in two to twelve months; egg-laying and hatching occur in no particular season.

"Once laid, the eggs are left alone to their fate. Few beholder eggs hatch any more; humans, demi-humans, and humanoid races all will go to great lengths to destroy them. And the influence of nature, with its storms and diseases, must be accounted for as well. Those eggs that survive will swell and grow over time until just before hatching, when they are three feet across. The young beholder then expands suddenly, splitting the shell apart, and it is free. At this time it eats its own shell, and is

immediately capable of using all the powers of its parent. Its bite is less powerful, much like a dagger thrust in effect, and certain of its magical influences are at reduced effectiveness, but it will grow within a year's time to be as dangerous as any other of its race."

The sage settled himself against the stone table he used for a lectern. "The life span of a beholder is unknown, but thought to be very long indeed. One specimen has survived, if the legends about it can be trusted, for nine hundred seasons. As for social and philosophical aspects of the beholder's existence . . . your guesses equal mine for accuracy. They desire the extinction of all species but themselves and those they can manipulate to increase their power and influence. This is almost all that is known of their innermost thoughts and designs."

There the sage paused and looked about the class expectantly. After a moment, the young boy who had caught the sage's attention earlier spoke up. "Teacher," he said, "what is the best way to kill one of them?"

I knew you would ask that, thought the old man to himself. He looked over the heads of his audience, at a point far away. "The best way to kill one of them . . . That is difficult to say. In combat,

beholders prefer not to close with an enemy, and will stand off a distance to use their spells. The little eye that performs telekinesis will come into play first, to hurl missiles at its opponents, catch light opponents and cast them into the air to be dropped, or to deflect oncoming missiles one at a time.

"The great eye, with its anti-magical influence, will focus on anyone who appears capable of spell casting, that is, anyone not wearing armor. As for closing with it, that cannot be done in the outdoors since it will levitate itself up out of the reach of weaponry, while tilting itself and allowing its eyes to continue to do their work. Perhaps the best way to slay one would be to attack it at long range with masses of archers, stout and paid well, and supported well by magic-armed fighters in case gargoyles lurked about. One could put poison in baited traps to catch the creature unawares, though a long wait is assured. One could use arcane and enchanted devices at either a great range, or at a closer range with the aid of protective rings or cloaks, and hope that the protection is enough. . . ."

At this juncture the sage's voice faded away as he looked into the eyes of the boy who had asked the difficult question. He remembered that the boy was a member of a nearby church, one that was rather strict and on the militant side, but a good church nonetheless. . . . And wasn't it

said that this boy was taking some kind of special training?

"Or," the sage went on, "someone who was immune to most of the magical powers of the beholder, such as a paladin with a holy sword — such a person could catch a beholder in its underground lair, and would stand a good chance of closing with it to destroy it in combat."

The boy nodded, apparently satisfied.

After another pause, the sage dusted off his hands again. "Class is over. I will see you all again tomorrow morning." He reached around behind him for his books and scrolls and carefully piled them up to take them back to his library. Before he left he turned one last time to follow the progress of the boy who had asked the question, but the youth was lost in the crowd of children who were now scattering to the four winds.

"Good luck," said the sage in a soft voice, as if to himself. Then he too took his leave of the amphitheater, and all was quiet again.

Appendix

1. Whenever a hit is attempted on a beholder, roll percentile dice to see where the hit might land:

01-75: Hit vs. AC 0 body (takes two-thirds of hit-point total of beholder before creature is slain).

76-85: Hit vs. AC 7 main (11th) eye (takes one-third of hit point total of

beholder before eye is destroyed, but beholder still alive).

86-95: Hit vs. AC 2 eyestalk, one only; roll d10 and use chart on p. 10 of the Monster Manual to determine which eyestalk is hit. Beholders with 45-54 hp have eyestalks that take 8 hp damage each before being severed; 55-64 hp beholders have eyestalks taking 10 hp damage; 65-75 hp beholders have eyestalks taking 12 hp damage. If severed, eye in question will cease functioning.

96-00: Hit vs. AC 7 small eye, one only; roll d10 as above to determine which eye is affected. Any hit on a small eye immediately destroys it and its powers.

2. The magic resistance of a beholder is listed as "special" because of the anti-magic ray emanating from the 11th eye. The ray, as stated by the sage, only causes magic spells and spell-like powers to cease functioning within its area of effect; the "plusses" of a magic sword, for instance, would remain functional (since this is not a spell-like power), but a *wand of fireballs* would not be able to cast a *fireball* spell while the ray was enveloping it and its wielder.

3. Beholders are considered as aerial maneuverability class A, despite their slow speed.

4. Newly hatched beholders may be considered to have 45 hp, and *charms*, *sleep*, *slow*, and *death* spells they cast are saved against at a +2 bonus. Unhatched beholders are AC 4, have no attacks, and take 25 hp to destroy.

5. The spell-like powers of the beholder's eyes work instantly, in the first segment of a melee round, but must "recharge" for the rest of the round before firing again.

6. Beholders may levitate themselves without limit, to the height of the breathable atmosphere.

7. The arrangement of each beholder's eyes is different from nearly all others; referees should work out this detail prior to combat to determine which eyes may fire in which direction, since the small eyes cannot point in just any direction. Ω

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LEONARD'S TINY AD&D

by Lenard Lakofka

For NPCs only: the death master

A magic-using "monster" to play *against*, not *as*

INTRODUCTION/SERMON

On the theme of the AD&D™ game

As corny as it may sound, I believe the theme of the ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® game system is the struggle between good and evil. It is a commitment to team action over individual play. Too often, an AD&D adventure or campaign is played as a "me first" game. This is quickly seen when the party tries to divide treasure, or the thief says that he is "role playing" when he keeps the biggest gem for himself.

A well-played AD&D campaign, in which the party becomes stronger as time goes on, in which material is divided by

judging who in the party can use it best, in which action and decision is shared by the group and not performed by the "caller," is unfortunately not seen too often. Alas, this is an opportunity missed.

The AD&D game should not have assassin player characters. In fact, no player character should be evil at all unless adverse magic affects him. Yet, many players will have their characters turn "evil" at the first opportunity, with greed being the biggest single cause of this change. In a situation I experienced, the paladin in a group tried to talk the ranger into knifing the magic-user in the back because the magic-user wanted the

recently found (and yet to be identified) wand. Players will change their characters' alignments at the drop of a hat, and often without enough of a penalty inflicted by the Dungeon Master.

However, I do not want to belabor the point. As a way of putting evil in its proper place, here is presented an evil character that makes an assassin look like the boy next door. The death master is meant as a non-player character — one the player characters and their party have to defeat. *Please* use the character that way only. If I ever run into a player-character death master at a convention, I may turn evil myself. . . .

The death master is a sub-class of magic-user. He will be ultimately chaotic evil, although his early alignment might even be lawful good. The death master will change alignment, moving one step closer to chaotic evil (if he isn't there already) upon the gaining of every two levels of experience. Goodness is lost first, and then lawfulness. Thus, a death master who starts out as lawful good will turn lawful neutral upon attaining 3rd level, true neutral at 5th level, neutral evil at 7th level, and chaotic evil at 9th level. In any event, a death master will be chaotic evil by the time he reaches 9th level, and in most cases the switch will not take that long. In this downward spiral, no magic — even a *wish* or a *helm of opposite alignment* — can move the death master's alignment in the direction away from chaotic evil.

The ability score requirements for this non-player character are as follows: strength of at least 9, intelligence at least 15, wisdom always less than 13, dexterity at least 12, constitution of 14 or better, and charisma always below 8.

A death master can be a human, dwarf, or half-orc, and members of any of those races can advance to 13th level. No death master can ever be multi-classed or double-classed. The death master has some of the abilities of an alchemist, since many of his magics involve the preparation of potions, salves, fluids, creams, and other sorts of mixtures.

Death masters can learn and use only

the knife, dagger, sickle, scythe, and/or scimitar — even to save their lives they will not pick up another weapon. Death masters can use magical weapons of the eligible types, with the exception of a *flame tongue* scimitar, which is prohibited. If a death master picks up an aligned weapon that he cannot use, he will take double ego damage unless the weapon's alignment is more evil and/or chaotic than the death master's current alignment. In the latter case, the death master will instantly convert to the new alignment. For example, if a neutral 3rd level death master picked up an evil neutral scimitar, he would take no damage but

would become evil neutral at once. If, on the other hand, the scimitar were lawful good, he or she would take double ego damage.

Notes on new weapon types: The sickle weighs approximately 15 gp, length 15-18 inches, space required 2 feet, speed factor 3, damage vs. S or M opponents 3-6, vs. L opponents 1-3, vs. armor as a short sword would be rated. The scythe weighs approximately 140 gp, length about 5 feet, space required 5 feet, speed factor 8, damage vs. S or M opponents 2-9, vs. L opponents 1-6, vs. armor as a bardiche.

Death masters shun armor of all types but may use rings, cloaks and jewelry of

THE DEATH MASTER

(This chart is for reference only; the death master can never be anything but a non-player character.)

Experience points		4-sided dice for accumulated hit points		Level title
	Level			
0—1,333	1	1+1		Grave Robber
1,334—2,666	2	2+2		Tomb Haunter
2,667—5,333	3	3+3		Necropolite
5,334—13,333	4	4+4		Skeleton Master
13,334—26,667	5	5+5		Zombie Master
26,667—53,333	6	6+6		Ghoul Master
53,334—113,333	7	7+7		Ghast Master
113,334—233,333	8	8+8		Shadow Master
233,334—466,667	9	9+9		Necromancer
466,668—933,333	10	10+10		Mummy Master
933,334—1,877,777	11	11+11		Ghost Master
1,877,778—3,333,333	12	12+12		Lich Master
3,333,334+	13	13+13		Death Master

protection, including *bracers of defense*.

Death masters may employ all potions, except for those that control living things, those that can only be used by fighters, those that are made for scrying, and those that heal. They cannot use scrolls, except for those penned in the *Language of Death* or those that control or protect from the undead. Such scrolls bypass the need, if any, for salves, creams, fluids, etc., that would otherwise produce the same effect.

Rings usable by death masters are: *feather fall*, *fire resistance*, *free action*, *invisibility*, *protection*, *regeneration* (see below), *spell turning*, *warmth* and *X-ray vision*. All other rings will not function on them unless they somehow affect the undead. A *ring of regeneration*, when placed on a death master of 9th level or higher, will instantly become invisible. Further, it will become non-corporeal when functioning one round after the death master dies. Cutting off the death master's head, or the hand bearing the ring, will stop the regeneration process.

Death masters may use a *staff of withering* and *wands of fear*, *magic detection*, *negation* and *paralyzation*. A few miscellaneous magic items can be used, including: *alchemy jug*, *amulet of life protection*, *amulet of the planes* (usable by them only to go to the lower planes of Pandemonium, the Abyss and Tarterus plus the Negative Material plane), *beaker*

of plentiful potions, *brooch of shielding*, *cloak of protection*, *cube of force*, *cubic gate*, *dust of all types*, *helm of comprehending languages*, *Keoghtom's ointment*, *Nolzur's marvelous pigments*, all *phylacteries*, all *scarabs*, and a *sphere of annihilation*. Additionally, they may use some items specific to their profession. These items are detailed later in this article.

The death master begins to learn specific alchemist-like skills at 3rd level and certain specific spells at 4th level. His teacher is always another death master. The death master must start up his own laboratory for a cost of 400 gp, and new equipment for the lab must be purchased at each level for an additional 400 gp. Costs for a specific raw material are separate from these laboratory costs. Most spell-like effects use special preparations that must be made in advance.

Special abilities

The death master has the following special powers and abilities, some of which are constant and some of which are gained/lost as he advances in levels:

1. First-level death masters obtain one experience point of experience for each grave they dig, and two experience points for every stolen body. This award does not apply beyond 1st level.

2. Second-level death masters obtain two experience points for every body laid

to rest. At other levels there is no experience award for this action.

3. Third-level death masters obtain three experience points for every properly embalmed body. This award is unique to this level only.

4. All death masters can identify a *potion of undead control* by tasting just a drop. Such a potion has double effect and double duration when imbibed by a death master.

5. An undead creature must fail a saving throw of 8 to successfully attack a death master. If the death master attacks the undead, of course, this "partial immunity" is overturned. Thus, undead may attack a group of characters and a death master will be allowed to walk away unharmed even if a lich or a vampire is the attacker or among them.

6. At fourth level and above, the death master can *speak with undead* at will. This does not create a compulsion to obey and cannot operate on mindless undead.

7. At seventh level the death master can *speak with dead* as a cleric of the same level without use of a spell. This power is usable once per day and only once on the same corpse.

8. The death master gains a cumulative 5% resistance to *sleep* and *charm* spells for each of his or her levels. If a saving throw is allowed, the death master is entitled to it if his magic resistance

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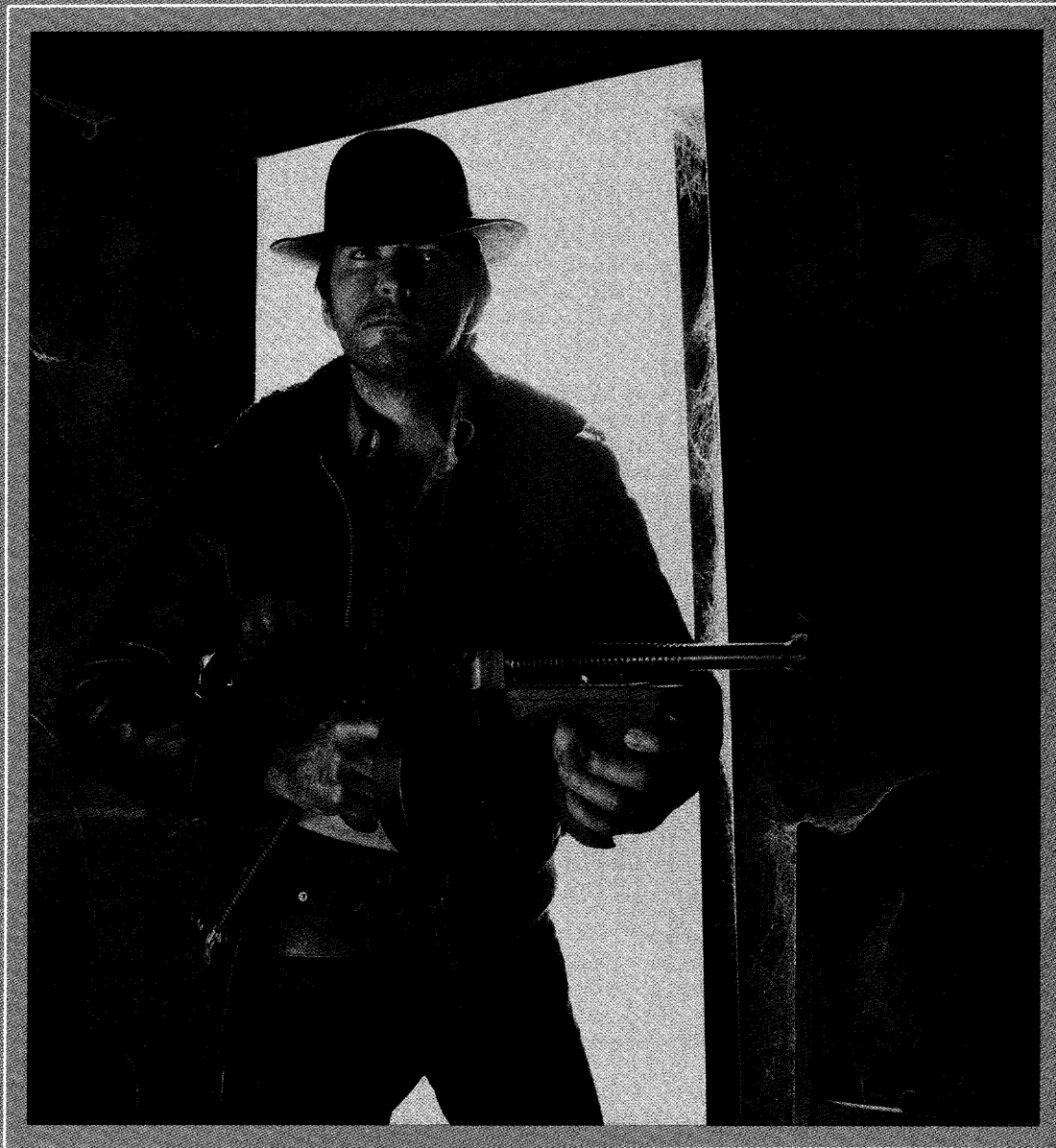
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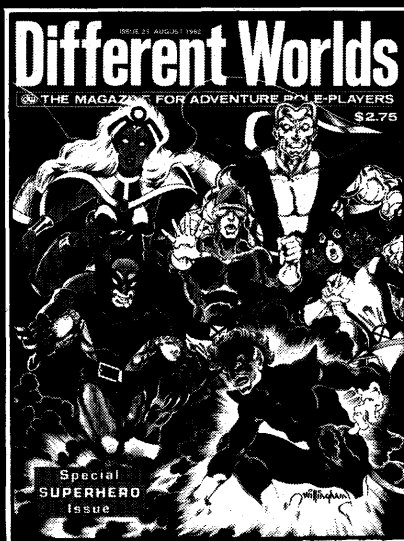
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does not overcome the sleep or charm power/spell.

9. At 9th level and above the death master is immune to *paralysis* and *hold* spells, including the touch of the undead.

10. At 11th level and above the death master is immune to level draining and strength draining by the undead, though normal damage from such an attack would still occur.

Death master spells

All spells of the death master must be learned just as a magic-user learns spells, but some spells given in the list that follows are the heart of his profession. These spells will be marked with +1, +2 or +3 to signify the effective bonus in intelligence points the death master gains when trying to learn that particular spell. Those

spells that require some manufactured material (a salve, potion, cream, fluid, paste, etc.) are marked with a "*" sign. Those that are new or have a different description from that found in the official rules are marked with an asterisk ("*").

Spells usable by level

Exp.	1	2	3	4	5	6
Level						
4	1					
5	2					
6	2	1				
7	2	1	1			
8	2	2	1	1		
9	2	2	2	2		
10	3	3	3	2		
11	3	3	3	3	1	
12	4	4	3	3	2	
13	4	4	4	4	3	1

First level

1. Animate skeletons *(+3)#
2. Animate zombies *(+3)#
3. Cause light wounds * #
4. Comprehend languages
5. Detect magic
6. Feather fall
7. Identify (+1)
8. Plant death *(+2)#
9. Preserve
10. Protection from good
11. Read magic
12. Scare
13. Shield
14. Unseen servant
15. Wizard mark
16. Write #

Second level

1. Attract ghouls *
2. Darkness 15' r.
3. Detect good/evil
4. Death armor *(+2)
5. Find familiar * #
6. Invisibility
7. Knock
8. Magic mouth
9. Pyrotechnics
10. Ray of enfeeblement
11. Stinking cloud
12. Wizard lock

Third level

1. Dispel magic
2. Feign death (+2)
3. Monster summoning I *
4. Protection good/evil 10'r.
5. Ghost production *(+2)#
6. Ray of paralysis *(+1)
7. Tongues
8. Wall of ice

Fourth level

1. Charm undead *(+3)
2. Dig
3. Fear
4. Ice storm
5. Mummy production *(+1)#
6. Shadow summoning *(+1)
7. Wight production *(+2)
8. Wraith production *(+1)

Fifth level

1. Animate dead
2. Cloudkill
3. Cause serious wounds * #
4. Cone of cold
5. Finger of death
6. Ghost production *
7. Hold undead *(+2)
8. Teleport

Sixth level

1. Death spell
2. Energy drain
3. Harm/heal
4. Lichdom *(+1)#
5. Undead production *(+2)#
6. Vampire production *(+1)#

Notes:

All spells of a death master are defined, for the purpose of range, duration, and area of effect, as if the character were three levels lower than his actual level. Thus, a fourth-level death master casts spells as a first-level magic-user or cleric.

Unless otherwise noted, a death master spell takes 1 segment per spell level to cast, even if the normal spell text for a cleric or magic-user may be faster or slower.

Spell notes/descriptions:

First level

Animate skeletons is simply an *animate dead* spell that produces one skeleton for every level of the death master. The death master must prepare a special salve to rub on the bones to make the skeleton receptive. This takes one round per skeleton. The magic to animate them then takes only a segment to cast. The rubbed skeletons can be so animated anytime within 24 hours after their rubdown. The salve costs 10 gp per skeleton. Spell range is 30 feet plus 10 feet per effective level of the death master.

Animate zombies is simply an *animate*

dead spell that produces one zombie for every effective level of the death master. The corpse must be immersed in a bath of special salts for 1 full turn prior to spell casting. Such a bath can soak ten corpses for a cost of 200 gp. The corpses then so soaked can be animated in two segments at a range of 50 feet plus 10 feet per effective level of the death master.

Cause light wounds will inflict 2-8 hit points of damage if a successful touch is made on a victim's bare skin. The death master must use a paste rubbed on his hands to activate the magic. A word of command then makes his hands into weapons for three rounds or until a touch

has occurred. The cost of the paste is 75 gp for enough to make three applications. Smearing the paste, assuming it is available, takes only a segment.

Plant death requires a fine mist spray be applied to the plant(s) to be killed. A potion-sized bottle would cost 200 gp and could cover 2,000 square feet. Then, upon the utterance of a word of command, the plants within 100 feet of the death master will die. Trees are allowed a saving throw of 11. Living mobile plants (such as treants) are allowed that saving throw plus another as a monster of the appropriate number of hit dice. Once killed, the plants wither and rot rapidly, and no new plants will grow in the area for a year.

Second level

Attract ghoul is similar to a *find familiar* spell, using the same ingredients, but the ghoul that comes is not willing to serve unless it is fed regularly. "Loyalty" and obedience is gained at 1%/day of feeding and attention. A safe lair must always be provided.

Death armor is produced by pouring a cream on the body and rubbing it in. This rubbing takes two full rounds. Then, anytime within the next hour per effective level of the death master, the speaking of a command sentence will activate the armor coating. Anyone touching the death master with exposed flesh (perhaps to cast a spell or as a monk

with an open hand attack) must save vs. spell or take 2-12 hit points of damage. The armor is effective for 1 round per *actual* level of the death master. Multiple touches will still harm the attacker. Note: The spell is defensive only, and the death master gains nothing by trying to touch someone though he or she can position him or herself so that he or she must be touched to get by. Naturally, if a weapon hit occurs the death master takes normal damage with no damage to the attacker. *Death armor* will harm undead. Any damage from the monk's open hand attack or a claw/bite attack will still be scored, of course.

Find familiar uses the same ingredients as for a magic-user, but the cost is doubled. The death master uses the following table (roll d20) for *find familiar*: 1-4, black cat; 5-8, weasel; 9, imp; 10, ghastr; 11, mephitr; 12, ghoul; 13-20, no reply but try again in one month. If an imp, ghastr, ghoul, or mephitr appears it does not add any hit points to the death master. If it is eliminated, however, the death master will lose 2-7 hit points permanently.

Third level

Monster summoning I will attract nearby skeletons and zombies not already animated or controlled by the death master. From 2-7 will arrive even if they must abandon a place they were ordered to

guard. They will arrive via teleportation in 1-4 rounds and will fight till destroyed. If not destroyed they will teleport back when the spell duration of 5-20 rounds runs out.

Ghastr production requires a ghoul to be at hand. The death master may animate only one ghastr per spell. The body must be infused with a special liquid that costs 400 gp to produce. The process takes 1 hour to prepare the body and 1 turn to cast the spell. Such ghastrs cannot "procreate" themselves but are like ghastrs in every other way. Someone killed by one of these ghastrs has a minus 1% to the chance to be raised from the dead for each hour the figure is dead. Thus, after 70 hours a victim with a constitution of 13 would have only a 20% chance to be successfully raised. If raised, however, subsequent raises would be allowed at the figure's full constitution score. Note: Magics like *remove curse*, *limited wish*, etc. can remove the onus on such a corpse so that raising is normal.

Ray of paralysis takes only one segment to activate and is a chief attack/defense spell for a death master. The ray is pencil-thin and has a length of 60 feet plus 10 feet per level of the death master. When it is fired at a living figure, that figure is allowed a double saving throw. The first is vs. spell to see if the ray hits at all. If the saving throw is made, the ray misses but those in direct line behind or

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near the victim (especially those in nearby melee) might then be struck. If the ray does hit, the victim saves vs. paralysis at -2. If this throw fails, the victim is paralyzed for 3d12 rounds.

Fourth level

Charm undead will work only on those undead having intelligence of 9 or higher. The undead (only one target) must make a saving throw at -3 or obey the death master and perform some mission for him. The undead will not openly expose itself to destruction (a vampire would not go into open sunlight), and such an obvious order will instantly cancel the charm. Once a specific order is fulfilled the charm breaks, though some orders might take years to fulfill. An order is a simple sentence of 12 words or less that is adjudicated as being "reasonable" by the Dungeon Master.

Mummy production requires an embalming fluid that costs 1,400 gp. The body must be wrapped and prepared, which will require six full hours. The spell then takes but 4 segments to complete by a simple command word issued within 24 hours of the embalming. One mummy is thus produced. It will obey the death master and do his bidding, but is allowed a saving throw of 17 (attempted daily) to become independent of the death master's control.

Shadow summoning will produce 2-7 shadows which will arrive in 1-8 rounds. The summoning takes 4 segments of casting time. They will stay and obey the death master for 1-20 rounds.

Wight production requires a corpse and a bone from a wight. If a *cubic gate* or *amulet of the planes* (or a similar device) is available, the wight bone is not required, since the death master can then actually touch the Negative Material Plane to gain the necessary power. For every wight so produced, the death master will lose one hit point permanently unless he saves vs. death magic. The wight so produced will always have maximum hit points, and it can "procreate" itself and command those wights to its service. Note that only the common wight produced by the spell is "friendly" to the death master. Lesser wights will attack the death master if they fail the aforementioned saving throw (recall that an undead will not attack a death master unless it fails a saving throw of 8).

One in five wights produced by this spell is atypical. It cannot drain energy levels. Instead, it drains hit points permanently with its touch. This type of wight will cause the living victim to fight at -1 per touch for 1 full hour after each touch. For example, consider a victim of 4th level with 30 hit points. On the first touch, the victim takes 5 points of damage. His new hit-point total is 25, and he will fight as 3rd level for 1 hour. If a second touch occurs (for, say, 2 points of damage), his permanent hit-point total

will be 23 and he will fight as 2nd level for 1 hour, then 3rd level the next hour, and then is back to being 4th level. The lost hit points can be gained back by *restoration* at the rate of 3-12 points per application of the spell, but if the victim gains a level (or levels) of experience prior to such *restoration*, then the hit points are forever lost, even if the power of a *wish* is used. A *limited wish* will restore 2-12 hit points and a full *wish* 3-18 hit points if the casting is done before the victim gains a level. No other magic will restore lost hit points. This sort of atypical wight can "procreate" to produce lesser undead with the same power.

Wraith production is identical to *wight production* in all respects. An atypical wraith is produced one time in seven as above.

Fifth level

Cause serious wounds requires that a liquid be produced from boiling the remains of a ghoul or ghastr for 24 hours. The remaining liquid is enough to fill 1 small vial (like those used to carry holy/unholy water) per effective level of the death master. The infusion's added components cost 2,000 gp. The vial is then thrown (see section of DMG on grenade-like missiles) like a vial of holy water. A direct hit will inflict 5-19 (2d8 +3) hit points of damage, with a splash hit doing 2-5 (d4 +1) points of damage. The vials of liquid will remain viable for 1 full day per level of the death master, plus a variable of 1-20 days. Exposing the liquid to testing (putting it in contact with the air) destroys it at once. The vial will not radiate evil.

Ghost production is unlike other death master spells in that the death master will have no control over the ghost once it fully forms 48 hours after the spell is cast. The ghost so produced will not know how it was created and will be fully free-willed. It would attack the death master if it met him again (if it failed the saving throw of 8 allowed to the death master). The victim must have had an intelligence of 14 or more and have been at least 9th level (in any class) prior to death. Hit points for such a ghost are maximum.

Hold undead literally stops a target undead in its tracks. It is allowed a saving throw vs. spell. The undead cannot be harmed while in this state, nor can it be bypassed; attempting to do either of these things will release it instantly. However, the death master and others in the party are safe to flee via another route. The *hold undead* spell takes 2 segments, to cast. The duration of the spell when used against a particular type of undead is expressed in minutes and determined by dividing 120 by the undead's hit dice. (Eliminate any bonus hit points; 3+2 HD would be read as 3. All fractions are dropped.) Thus, a ghoul of 2 HD is held in place for 60 minutes, while a vampire of 8 HD can be held for 15 minutes. This

formula applies to the undead from the FIEND FOLIO™ Tome as well.

Sixth level

Harm or *heal* is identical to the 6th level cleric spell, except that casting time is only 6 segments.

Lichdom can be cast on a willing high priest or magic-user of at least 18th level, or a death master of 13th level. The death master must make a potion for the spell caster to consume. Its cost will be 6,000 gp. The spell caster is allowed his normal unadjusted saving throw vs. death magic. If the victim makes the saving throw, he becomes a lich in 24 hours. If he fails the saving throw, then he is merely dead. The spell caster can be raised in the usual manner and the process tried again. However, the spell caster will have lost a level of experience and may have to requalify to become a lich. The death master can cast this spell on himself.

Undead production is designed to produce the vast number of evil (but not neutral) undead listed in the FIEND FOLIO Tome. This spectrum is very diversified. Only one undead, regardless of hit dice, can be so manufactured. That undead cannot procreate itself but will conform to the statistics and abilities given in the FIEND FOLIO book in all other ways. Its hit points will always be maximum. The undead, to rise up from being a corpse, must make its "in-life" saving throw vs. poison or the spell will fail.

Vampire production will also produce a spectre if the death master so chooses. The corpse must have been killed by a vampire or spectre, but in a way that would not allow the corpse to rise as one of those undead (i.e., killed from damage, not from levels being drained). The corpse is allowed a saving throw vs. spell, and if it fails it becomes a vampire or spectre. The undead so produced is answerable to the death master for one year, but thereafter is free-willed, bearing no animosity toward the death master. The potions required cost 6,000 gp for a vampire and 4,500 gp for a spectre. This undead will have maximum hit points but cannot procreate until it is free-willed.

Special magic items

Below are listed and described magic weapons and items that are usable to their full potency only by a death master.

Withering Scythe: This weapon is +2 to hit and does normal damage with no bonus. However, the victim must save vs. poison or also suffer the loss of 1 hit point per round thereafter from a slow but powerful poison effect. The only antidotes for this poison are *cure disease* cast by a cleric or druid of at least 9th level, *heal*, *regenerate*, *restoration*, *limited wish*, or *wish*. A good-aligned figure who simply picks up the scythe is subject to the same poison effect.

Eyes of the Undead: These cups that fit

over the eyes look like any of the other magical types. However, they allow a figure to see living things at a range of 90 feet even in total darkness and even if the figure is invisible or is somehow cloaked or protected from normal sight. The eyes will see an aura of life without being able to see details of the figure's face, etc. Wearing the eyes cancels normal or magical *infravision*. The eyes of the undead prevent a vampire from *charming* their wearer. If worn for 1 full day, the eyes will mold themselves to the wearer's eyes and cannot be removed until that figure is dead. To others, the victim's eyes look totally white. In all cases, the wearer's natural charisma will drop by two points while the eyes are worn so that they can be seen by others.

Cloak of Night: This magical cloak will operate only on a non-good figure. If a good figure wears it, he will automatically be attacked first by any undead encountered even if those undead must push past other party members to get at the wearer. The cloak, when worn by a non-good figure, confers the following powers at night only: *polymorph* with all possessions into a bat, stirge, crow, or owl at will in 1 segment (the figure must return to normal shape before changing into a different form); gain 90-foot *infravision* (whether underground or not); and act as a *cloak of elvenkind*.

Spectre Wand: This wand only operates in the hands of a death master. It fires a jet-black ray to a range of 180 feet. A hit by the ray is determined as if the intended victim had been attacked by a 6 HD monster vs. the target's frontal armor class (assuming the target is facing the wielder of the wand). If this roll "to hit" is not made, there is no effect. If the ray does hit, the target takes 1-8 hit points of damage (no saving throw), and that many points are drained *permanently* from the figure's hit-point total. The wand takes 1 segment to fire, can have from 1 to 50 charges when found, and cannot be recharged. The victim can only regain lost hit points in one of three ways: *limited wish* (2-8 points), *restoration* (2-12 points), or a *wish* (3-18 points). Once the victim gains a new level of experience, lost hit points that have not yet been regained are forever lost.

Gauntlets of the Ghoul: If a good figure puts these on, he must save vs. paralysis each round until they are removed or until he is paralyzed. They can only be removed by *dispel magic* or *remove curse*, and even then removal must be done within 2 rounds of the spell being cast or they will again lock on the victim's hands. The figure will remain paralyzed until the gauntlets are then removed. If a neutral figure puts them on, nothing will happen. If an evil figure puts them on, his touch will be as that of a ghoul, inflicting 1-4 hit points of damage per touch (hand), and a victim must save vs. paralysis or be paralyzed for 5-20 rounds.

Potions, salves, and pastes

Correct concoction of necessary potions, salves and pastes is a function of the death master's level as well as chance. If he fails in an attempt to concoct a mixture, this will not be apparent until the spell casting attempt is carried out. Given in the chart is the percent chance that the

substance will, in fact, be correctly made (00 is a 100% chance; -- is no chance). It is up to the Dungeon Master to determine the major ingredient(s) in each substance and allowable substitutes, if any. The DM may, of course, rule that some substitutes will increase or decrease the chance of successful concoction.

Particular substance required by spell	Chance of correct concoction per level of death master											cost to produce	Time to produce
	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13			
Animate skeleton rub	80	85	90	94	97	99	00	00	00	00	10 gp/skel.	2-7 hours	
Animate zombie bath	76	80	84	88	92	96	99	00	00	00	200 gp/10	2-7 hours	
Cause lt. w. potion	90	93	95	97	99	00	00	00	00	00	75 gp/3	1-4 hours	
Plant death spray	75	79	83	87	91	94	97	00	00	00	200 gp	1-6 hours	
Death armor cream	--	--	93	95	97	98	99	00	00	00	100 gp	1-4 hours	
Find familiar soup	--	--	88	91	94	97	98	99	00	00	250 gp	4-16 hours	
Ghast infusion	--	--	--	77	82	87	92	96	99	00	400 gp	6-36 hours	
Mummy embalm fluid	--	--	--	--	87	91	95	97	98	99	1,400 gp	3-12 hours	
Cause s. w. potion	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	95	98	00	2,000 gp	5-20 hours	
Lichdom potion	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	93	6,000 gp	5-20 hours	
Undead goop	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	90	400 gp/hd	7-56 hours	
Vampire eye drops	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	94	6,000 gp	8-80 hours	
Spectre gas	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	97	4,500 gp	6-72 hours	

Henchmen, hirelings, and Orcus

The death master may only have hirelings and henchmen who are evil. Such henchmen are the outcasts of their own races (humans, half-orcs and dwarves only, as well as any neutral evil or chaotic evil humanoids), often fleeing for their lives because of some atrocity they have performed. Rangers, paladins, clerics, druids, monks, bards, and illusionists will never be hirelings or henchmen for a death master.

Some chaotic evil tribes of humanoids revere the death master, since he can produce armies of undead types to aid them on their missions. The death master can thus give the tribal witch doctor (and in some few cases the shaman) control of some animated undead. Such undead must be basically mindless, all of the same type, and have fewer than 4 hit dice. The undead controlled by the witch doctor or shaman may be up to ten times his level in hit dice; for instance, a gnoll witch doctor of 5th level can command 50 hit dice of undead. Any undead commanded in this manner can be taken over

again by the death master any time he desires to do so.

Eventually a death master becomes a demon-worshiper who ultimately worships Orcus. Such a demon-worshipping death master is also allowed a saving throw of 8 before a lesser demon will attack him physically if a *protection from evil* spell is not in force.

A death master of 13th level who is killed on the feast day of Orcus (sometimes called Halloween) will become an undead under Orcus' direction. Some death masters will even commit suicide on that date when they are 13th level, so as to better serve the demon prince. Orcus is 45% likely to notice this action and to animate the death master with all of the character's powers intact.

Death masters, once they become chaotic evil, seek seclusion virtually always near an old graveyard or abandoned dungeon. There they will seek to produce undead armies to wreak destruction upon living beings around them. Only chaotic evils and some neutral evils will try to hire and/or ally with a death master. Ω

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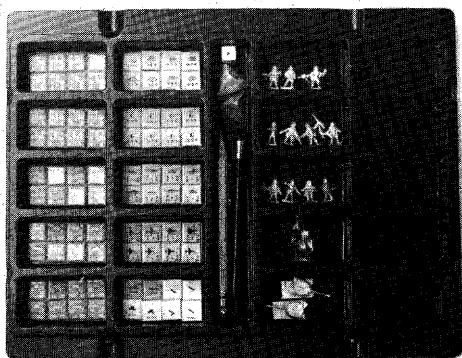
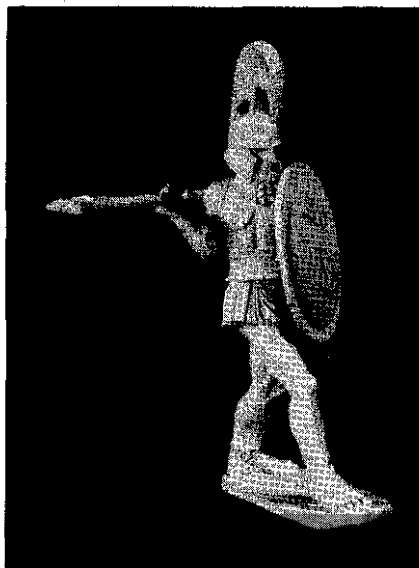


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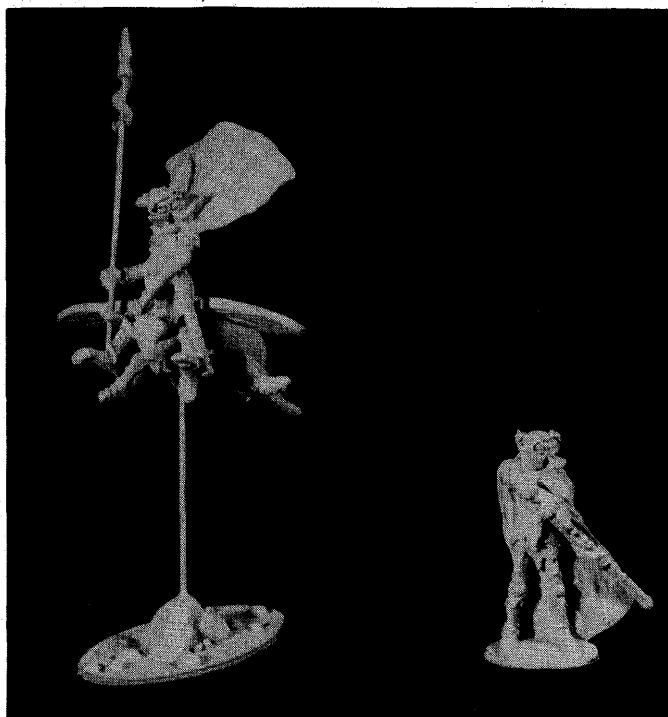


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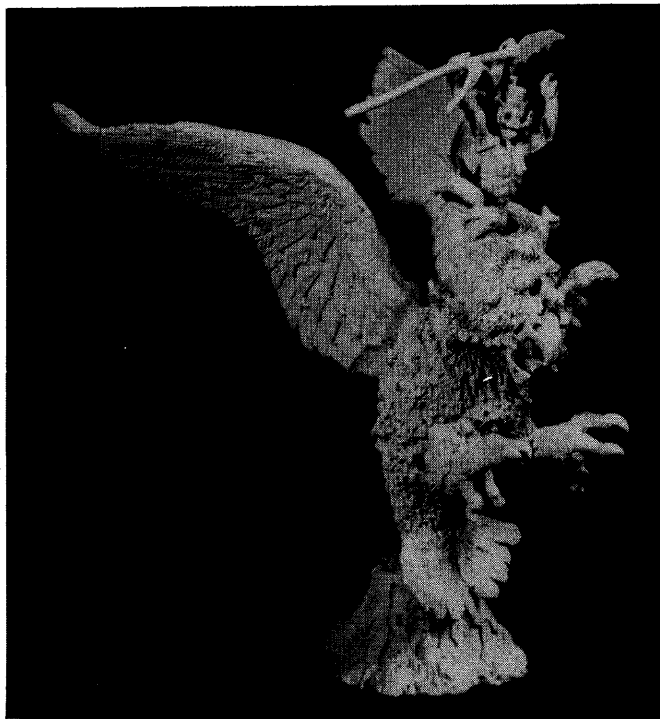
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SF/gaming convention calendar

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VULCON '83, Aug. 19-21

SF author Roger Zelazny will be the guest of honor at this science fiction/fantasy/gaming event to be held in Akron, Ohio. Registration is \$8 in advance, \$10 at the door. For more information, contact Stargate, c/o Sarah Blick, 150 Conger Ave., Akron OH 44303.

CAMPCON 83, Aug. 20

A game convention to be held at Camp Emmanuel near Astoria, Ill. For details, contact Kevin B. Sager, Box 833, Astoria IL 61501, phone (309)329-2934.

7th ANNUAL BANGOR AREA WARGAMERS CONVENTION, Aug. 29-31

The University of Maine campus in Orono is the site of this event. No advance registration is taken; admission fee is \$5 at the door. For more information, contact Edward F. Stevens, Jr., 32 Masonic St., Rockland ME 04841, phone (207)596-0338.

2nd ANNUAL SQUAD LEADER OPEN, Aug. 31-Sept. 1

A round-robin tournament, each participant playing five games. Further information: Don Munsell, 6101 McBride St., Charlotte NC 28205.

COLONIAL CITY GAMEFEST, Sept. 2-3

At the Ohio National Guard Armory in Mt. Vernon. Role-playing, armor & *Star Fleet Battles* miniatures tournaments, a painting contest and many boardgames are on the agenda. For details, write to Colonial City Gamefest, Mt. Vernon Gamers Association, P.O. Box 846, Mt. Vernon OH 43050.

GATEWAY 1983, Sept. 3-5

Southern California's largest strategy game convention and exposition will be held at the Sheraton-Anaheim Hotel near Disneyland in Anaheim, Calif. Activities for everyone from novice to expert in a wide variety of games, plus exhibits and special events. Admission for the weekend is \$13.50 for pre-registered entrants (postmark deadline: Aug. 10), or \$15 for a three-day pass at the door. One-day passes are \$10. For more information, write to Strategicon PR Dept., P.O. Box 2577, Anaheim CA 92804.

WRATH OF CON 1983, Sept. 16-17

To be held on the campus of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, this event emphasizes role-playing games. A two-round D&D® tournament and non-competitive sessions in several RPGs will be offered, plus an SCA demonstration and an exhibitor area. Contact: UNC-CH D&D Club, No. 403 Northampton Plaza, Chapel Hill NC 27514.

MASSCON '83, Sept. 24-25

Tournaments in all types of games and demonstrations of historical miniatures battles are the highlights of this event on the University of Massachusetts campus at Amherst. Admission is \$3 for one day, \$5 for the weekend. Food and lodging are available at the Campus Center, which is also where registration takes place. For details, contact MassCon, P.O. Box 117, Amherst MA 01002.

TRI-CON II, Oct. 1-2

A fantasy and science-fiction gaming convention at the Sheraton Pittsburgh South, featuring tournaments, exhibits, demonstrations, and a dealer/trader area, with Thom "Hawk" Christopher as special guest. Memberships are \$25 for adults, \$15 for those under 12 until Sept. 1, when each fee is raised \$10. Membership is by advanced registration only; no passes are sold at the door. For information on how to register, contact Trinetta Kern, 1037 Francis Road, Castle Shannon PA 15234.

TOL-CON II, Oct. 1-2

At the University of Toledo, Scott Park Campus. Role-playing and boardgame competition, painted miniature contests, and manufacturers' displays are some of the attractions of this convention, expected to attract a crowd of nearly 1,000. Contact: Mind Games, 3001 N. Reynolds Road, Toledo OH 43615, or phone (between 4-8 p.m. Monday through Friday) 419-531-5540.

EARTHCON III, Oct. 7-10

A large convention formerly devoted to

science fiction but now also featuring a number of gaming competitions and events. Four popular fantasy/SF authors — Marion Zimmer Bradley, Katherine Kurtz, Jacqueline Lichtenberg, and Jean Lorrah — will be special guests. The site is the Charter House Inn, Euclid, Ohio. Advance registration is \$18 until Aug. 31, \$20 thereafter. One-day admission is \$10 at the door. For complete registration information, write to EarthCon III, P.O. Box 22041, Beachwood OH 44122.

SUNCOAST SKIRMISHES '83, Oct. 14-16

Historical and adventure gaming, demonstrations, and seminars will be held at the Holiday Inn Central Convention Center in Tampa, Fla. For more information, write to Suncoast Skirmishes '83, 4006 Wallace Ave., Tampa FL 33611, or phone 813-831-1762.

WORLD FANTASY CONVENTION '83, Oct. 28-30

This annual extravaganza moves to the Midwest for its ninth running. To be held at the Marriott O'Hare in Chicago, it will feature Robert Bloch as toastmaster and Gene Wolfe, Manly Wade Wellman, and artist Rowena Morrill as special guests. Memberships are \$30 in advance, \$35 at the door if any are still available. Contact: World Fantasy Convention '83, P.O. Box 423, Oak Forest IL 60452.

NECRONOMI-CON 1983, Oct. 28-30

Piers Anthony and Robert Adams are guests of honor for this Halloween weekend convention at the Holiday Inn in downtown Tampa, Fla. Memberships are \$10 until Oct. 15, \$15 at the door if available. For details: Necronomi-Con, P.O. Box 2076, Riverview FL 33569.

CONCENTRIC 83, Nov. 18-20

A fantasy/SF/gaming convention to be held at the Holiday Inn West in Columbia, Mo., featuring Jack Chalker as guest of honor. Contact: ConCentric, P.O. Box 7514, Columbia MO 65205.

CRUSADER CON III, Jan. 13-15, 1984

To be held at the Metropolitan State College Campus in Denver, Colo. Registration fee is \$8 until Jan. 1, 1984, and \$10 thereafter. For more information, write to The Auraria Gamers Club, Metropolitan State College, 1006 11th Street, Box #39, Denver CO 80204.

WISCON 8, Feb. 24-26, 1984

Noted writers Jessica Amanda Salmonson and Elizabeth A. Lynn are guests of honor for this SF/gaming event at the Inn on the Park in Madison, Wis. Contact: WisCon 8, P.O. Box 1624, Madison WI 53701.

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The Nine Hells

by Ed Greenwood

Part II

6. MALBOLGE

The sixth plane of the Nine Hells is ruled by Baalzebul through his viceroy Moloch (Baalzebul's own abode is not on this plane). Moloch is continually ordered about by his lord and watched by the tribune Bileth, for Baalzebul fears that to allow the Grand Duke to rest undisturbed here for long would enable him to somehow wrest control of Malbolge from the Lord of the Flies.

An outsider might well wonder why Moloch would want to rule such a place, for nothing grows in Malbolge. It is a plane of craggy, tumbled black stone and ash, filled with stinking vapors, smokes, fire pits, and huge caves and caverns. The air is always hot and choking, and intruders will find that anything flammable remaining in contact with the ground for more than 4 rounds (such as dry wood, paper, hair, dry cloth, and the like) must save versus (normal) fire or burst into flames. Any such substances that are almost continually in contact with the ground (e.g., the soles of boots) must save at the end of every 4-round period.

Malbolge is a noisy place, populated by tormented lemures, malebranche, and occasional spined and styx devils, all of whom suffer at the hands of the cruel Baalzebul (who delights in torture), upon his visits, and the almost equally cruel Moloch. Both delight in the torture and disfigurement of devils, so many (at least 50%) of the lesser devils found on this plane will hate them to the point of agreeing to active rebellion (if such an effort seems likely to succeed), and such devils are likely (80%) to be missing an arm or leg, or be suffering a similar sort of infirmity, as a result of the amusements of the Grand Duke and his master.

Malbolge is continually patrolled by pairs of malebranche who report to their commander, the pit fiend Bethage; to the legate Tartach; or to Moloch himself (or to Baalzebul, if the Lord of the Flies is present). Intruders are always brought alive to the horned devils' commander for torment and questioning (or the malebranche patrol themselves will suffer in the intruders' place). Few intruders escape, and fewer still are allowed to live for any length of time, for Baalzebul jealously grasps and guards all power and knowledge that he can, seeking to keep it from other archdevils (particularly Mephistopheles and Asmodeus), so as to eventually gain the power to rule all of the hells.

Moloch moves with his consort Lilith from fortress to fortress of the malebranche upon Baalzebul's orders (usually brought by the herald Neabaz). Tartach is Moloch's deputy and ambassador to the vassal dukes and to visitors, and Bileth is the tribune installed by Baalzebul as a watchdog upon Moloch and others who



would take control of the plane. Baalzebul finds it a continual struggle to retain two planes under his own sway, in a diabolic society where all are ambitious and there are not enough planes to go around. All of the vassals and assistants to Moloch, including Lilith, are regarded as loyal to Baalzebul, although Tartach and Lilith (who feel largely powerless in the current regime) might support a strong bid to seize Malbolge by another arch-devil.

The defensive forces of Malbolge consist of nine companies of malebranche under the command of the pit fiend Bethage, and sixteen companies of bone devils led by the pit fiend Herobaal.

LILITH (Princess of Hell)

FREQUENCY: *Unique (Very rare)*
NO. APPEARING: 1
ARMOR CLASS: -1
MOVE: 16"/30"
HIT DICE: 71 *hit points*
% IN LAIR: 80%
TREASURE TYPE: C, I, S
NO. OF ATTACKS: 2
DAMAGE/ATTACK: 2-12, *or by weapon type +5*
SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*
SPECIAL DEFENSES: *See below*
MAGIC RESISTANCE: 75%
INTELLIGENCE: *Genius*
ALIGNMENT: *Lawful evil*
SIZE: L (9' tall)
PSIONIC ABILITY: 222
Attack/Defense Modes: *All/all*

Lilith is consort to Moloch, viceroy of the sixth plane of the Nine Hells. She is held in high regard by many witches on the Prime Material Plane, who hold (and keep secret from others) the rituals for summoning her thence. Lilith serves Baalzebul, but her loyalty is not what it used to be; she feels largely powerless in the current regime, and resents being moved here and there at Baalzebul's behest. She often works with the legate Tartach, who is of like mind. Lilith is personally most attractive, and many devils will do her small favors as a result.

Lilith can employ at will the following spell-like powers, one at a time and once per round: *pyrotechnics*, *produce flame*, *animate dead*, *ESP*, *dispel magic*, *read magic*, *tongues*, *charm person*, *detect invisibility*, *darkness* 15' radius, *invisibility*, *suggestion*, *know alignment*, *polymorph self*, *fireball* (2d6), *teleport*, and (fulfill another's limited) *wish*. Twice per day Lilith can employ a *finger of death*, and once per day she can hurl a (4d6) *lightning bolt*. She radiates fear at will in a 2" radius (save vs. spell at -2 to avoid). Lilith can *summon* 1-2 malebranche with a 60% chance of success. Lilith regenerates 3 points of damage every turn.

Description: Lilith appears as a beautiful, curvaceous human female of giant

stature, save that her eyes are glowing white (pupils and all), her skin is crimson, and she has hooves, a serpent's tail, and small curving horns. She rarely wears garments, cloaking herself in *darkness* (see above) when *summoned* if she deems it necessary. She fights with any weapons available but prefers to strike with her tail, which does 2-12 constriction damage per round; it is long and strong enough to immobilize one M-sized target. She usually bears a slim scimitar or a barbed whip (two 10' strands with metal barbs; these do 1-8 base damage each and can strike the same or adjacent targets; they can entangle weapons or limbs, but she rarely employs them thus, fearing damage to the weapon). Significantly, a deep lash welt is commonly known in the hells as "Lilith's Mark."

TARTACH (Duke of Hell)

FREQUENCY: *Unique (Very rare)*
NO. APPEARING: 1
ARMOR CLASS: -2
MOVE: 12"
HIT DICE: 114 *hit points*
% IN LAIR: 75%
TREASURE TYPE: C, I, P
NO. OF ATTACKS: 1
DAMAGE/ATTACK: *By weapon type +7*
SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*
SPECIAL DEFENSES: *See below*
MAGIC RESISTANCE: 70%
INTELLIGENCE: *Exceptional*
ALIGNMENT: *Lawful evil*
SIZE: L (10' tall)
PSIONIC ABILITY: 212
Attack/Defense Modes: *All/all*

Tartach serves Baalzebul as legate to Moloch, the viceroy of Malbolge. His loyalty to Baalzebul is outwardly strong, but Tartach feels relegated to a position of minor importance, when elsewhere in the hells many of lesser strength have higher standing. If an arch-devil made a bid to gain control of Malbolge that seemed likely to succeed — or if Moloch were menaced in some way — Tartach might aid the attempt, or at least not move to block it. Tartach has a dark, cruel sense of humor, and enjoys tormenting weaker creatures. He fights with a *flame tongue sword* and a *rope of entanglement*.

Tartach can employ the following spell-like powers at will, one at a time and once per round: *pyrotechnics*, *produce flame*, *fireball* (3d6 damage), *dispel magic*, *detect invisibility*, *know alignment*, *hold monster*, *wall of fire*, *teleport*, and (fulfill another's limited) *wish*. Once per day he can use a *symbol of stunning*, and once per day he can *feebleshoot* another creature. Tartach causes *fear* by eye contact (save vs. spell at -3 to avoid effects) on any creatures (one target per round) within a 4" radius. He can *summon* 1-2 malebranche (with a 70% chance

of success). Tartach regenerates 2 hit points per round.

Description: Tartach appears as a human of giant stature wearing a beard and mustache and with stubby, hooked horns on his forehead. He has no tail, but his feet have the pads and fur (but not the claws) of a lion, and his skin is of a fiery orange hue. He wears robes of black or purple silk, and walks with cold dignity.

BILETH (Duke of Hell)

FREQUENCY: *Unique (Very rare)*
NO. APPEARING: 1
ARMOR CLASS: -3
MOVE: 14"/21"
HIT DICE: 121 *hit points*
% IN LAIR: 75%
TREASURE TYPE: C, P
NO. OF ATTACKS: 2
DAMAGE/ATTACK: 2-12, 2-12
SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*
SPECIAL DEFENSES: *See below*
MAGIC RESISTANCE: 70%
INTELLIGENCE: *Genius*
ALIGNMENT: *Lawful evil*
SIZE: L (9½' tall)
PSIONIC ABILITY: 224
Attack/Defense Modes: *All/all*

Bileth serves Baalzebul as tribune on Malbolge, acting as a watchdog and a check on the actions of Moloch. Bileth speaks with the authority of Baalzebul, but stands apart from the regime run by Moloch, serving as a justiciar independent of the viceroy. Moloch can do nothing against Bileth, and must submit to his commands, but has tried to undermine the tribune's effectiveness in Malbolge by spreading the word among the malebranche that Bileth is insane.

Bileth can use the following spell-like powers at will, one at a time and once per round: *pyrotechnics*, *produce flame*, *wall of fire*, *anti-magic shell*, *dispel magic*, *detect invisibility*, *know alignment*, *charm person*, *suggestion*, *ESP*, *tongues*, *detect lie*, *repulsion*, *teleport*, and (fulfill another's limited) *wish*. Once per day he can use a *death spell*, and twice per day he can cause a *flame strike*. Bileth causes *fear* by touch (save vs. spell at -2 to avoid) and can *summon* 1-2 malebranche (75% chance of success) or Baalzebul himself (5% chance of success). Bileth regenerates 2 hit points per round.

Description: Bileth appears as a large man clad in gilded coat-of-plate. He uses weapons only in a pinch, preferring to fight with his fists (2-12 damage each), backed up by his massive strength. He is bearded, crimson-skinned, and has horns and hooves. He is tailless, but has large black bat-like leathery wings. Once per day he can *breathe fire* (in a cone 25' long and 10' wide at its end, doing 3-18 damage; save vs. breath weapon for 2-12), but he will do this only if angered or hard-pressed.



7. MALADOMINI

The seventh plane of the hells is also ruled by Baalzebul, who dwells there in a great fortress of black stone. Baalzebul's fortress, Malagard, sprawls for many miles, and consists of countless black spired towers linked by many open and covered bridge-spans that crisscross and slant crazily in all directions. Here Baalzebul is attended by his consort Baftis, his herald Neabaz, and his marshal Barbatos, plus malebranche and many lesser devils of all sorts whom he has commanded to service. Malagard's rooms, passages, and dungeons are so vast and numerous that it is said not even the Lord of the Flies himself has visited all of them. Most of those who escape cells of torment in Malagard flee to the dungeons, seldom penetrated very deeply by the devils, and many weird creatures are said to roam this lightless underworld.

The fortress above contains many rich and sumptuously furnished chambers, many cells for prisoners and for larvae awaiting use, and rooms upon rooms that are choked with garbage. Filth of all sorts, including carrion and anything that is broken and useless (for none of the

devils here can be bothered to repair anything) is carried to neglected areas of Malagard by servant spined devils, and tossed into any unused space, so that entire towers of the fortress are crammed with reeking debris.

Outside, the plane of Maladomini is very similar to Malbolge: hot underfoot (see Malbolge, above, for effects on flammable objects) and filled with stinking vapors, earth tremors and underground explosions, fire pits, smokes, and huge caves and caverns. Maladomini's surface is also despoiled by vast quarries where lesser devils and enslaved prisoners toil ceaselessly to cut the stones from which Malagard and the castles of the malebranche are built. Roads wind and crisscross the landscape from quarry to quarry to the various castles, and the entire plane is littered with the tumbled ruins of long-ago cities and towers, and the ever-larger new works.

Great arched bridges, carved with diabolic faces, span the rivers of molten lava that cut across Maladomini, and from the rivers canals have been cut to carry the liquid fire, so that it encircles every castle of the malebranche with a moat of leaping flames. The rivers of lava are swelled by volcanic cascades and eruptions, and

run in the end to a great sea of lava that seems to encircle the plane. Within this sea are a ring of volcanic mountains, and within this ring lies the confusion of Malagard, malebranche castles, ruins, roads, and quarries. Baalzebul is said to have vast collections of gems and plants (the latter tended continually by enslaved creatures) in Malagard, but no green things grow in this plane outside Malagard's walls.

Neabaz (as herald) is the only devil allowed by Baalzebul to move freely about the hells. Barbatos is charged with the duty of arranging malebranche messengers and weaponry so that the armies of Maladomini can be gathered quickly for battle. These malebranche armies — 60 companies under the duke Abigor, and 28 under the duke Zepar — are customarily occupied with the endless construction of Malagard, other fortresses, and linking roads. Spined devils, typically overseen by styx devils or (rarely) bone devils, feed and tend to the wants of the malebranche laborers. Pit fiends are noticeably absent from Baalzebul's service on Maladomini; the Lord of the Flies suspects all such of being spies for Asmodeus, and is reluctant to allow any of the creatures on the same plane he inhabits.

BAFTIS (Princess of Hell)

FREQUENCY: *Unique (Very rare)*
NO. APPEARING: 1
ARMOR CLASS: -1
MOVE: 16"/30"
HIT DICE: 79 *hit points*
% IN LAIR: 80%
TREASURE TYPE: D, G
NO. OF ATTACKS: 2
DAMAGE/ATTACK: 2-8 *or by weapon type +5*
SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*
SPECIAL DEFENSES: *See below*
MAGIC RESISTANCE: 75%
INTELLIGENCE: *Genius*
ALIGNMENT: *Lawful evil*
SIZE: L (9' tall)
PSIONIC ABILITY: 220
Attack/Defense Modes: *All/all*

Baftis is consort to Baalzebul, The Lord of the Flies. A quiet, subservient consort, she is more than a little afraid of her lord, and rarely acts on her own behalf without specific permission from him. Baftis is somewhat proud and will be outraged if her person or belongings are threatened by lesser creatures. Her fanged bite does 2-8 points of damage. She normally carries a bronze spear.

Baftis can employ the following spell-like powers, one at a time and once per round: *pyrotechnics, produce flame, wall of fire, wall of smoke (= fog), animate dead, dispel magic, charm person, suggestion, detect invisibility, darkness 15' radius, paralyzation (= hold person or monster, by touch, lasts 1-3 turns; save vs. paralyzation to avoid), teleport, and (fulfill another's limited) wish*. Once per day Baftis can employ a *finger of death*, and thrice per day she can *heal* herself or others (by touch). She causes *fear* by speaking to a creature within 3" (save vs. spell at -1 to avoid). Baftis can *summon* 1-3 malebranche with a 70% chance of success. She regenerates 1 point of damage every 3 rounds.

Description: Baftis appears as a tall, attractive, but rather forbidding human female, save for her tall, spired horns, batlike wings, crimson skin, and hooves. She has no tail, and — unusual for a devil — eyes of lavender hue. She almost always wears loose, open robes; it is said she is sensitive about the lighter shade of her skin down her back — of a human, almost ivory hue. Once a human on the Prime Material Plane uttered an oath mentioning "the pearly spine of Baftis," and she took that as a *summons*, appearing and rending the unfortunate with her jaws and claws (which do 1-3 damage each when she is weaponless).

NEABAZ (Duke of Hell)

FREQUENCY: *Unique (Very rare)*
NO. APPEARING: 1
ARMOR CLASS: -3

MOVE: 16"/30"
HIT DICE: 124 *hit points*
% IN LAIR: 15%
TREASURE TYPE: *See below*
NO. OF ATTACKS: 2
DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1-6 *or by weapon type +4*
SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*
SPECIAL DEFENSES: *See below*
MAGIC RESISTANCE: 70%
INTELLIGENCE: *Exceptional*
ALIGNMENT: *Lawful evil*
SIZE: M (6' tall)
PSIONIC ABILITY: 190
Attack/Defense Modes: *All/all*

Neabaz serves Baalzebul as herald, and as such is rarely idle. He respects his master and likes his work, for he is placed in the Nine Hells well above any station he could achieve by his own means, due to his association with the Lord of the Flies. Physically weak in comparison to other greater devils, Neabaz has by Baalzebul's orders been provided with magical weaponry to augment his means of personal defense. His bare fists do only 1-6 damage each, and his chief attack is blood drain: When his human-like mouth is open, he can extrude a foot-long proboscis from within, and suck blood (1-6 points per round, both upon initial contact and thereafter for as long as he can grip the victim). Neabaz is careful and polite at all times, fearing to offend an arch-devil (and any creature may be a *polymorphed* arch-devil, to his slightly paranoid mind).

Neabaz can use the following spell-like powers at will, one at a time and once per round: *pyrotechnics, produce flame, fireball (2d6), dispel magic, detect magic, read magic, read languages, tongues, know alignment, detect invisibility, teleport, and (fulfill another's limited) wish*. Once per day he can *slay living* (by touch), and at will he can cause *fear* in a 2" radius. Neabaz can *summon* (40% chance of success) 1-3 malebranche, or (50% chance of success) 1-4 bone devils. He regenerates 1 hit point every 2 rounds.

Description: Neabaz appears as a smoothly polite, cold-blooded, and very handsome man — save for his tiny pointed horns and transparent, housefly-like wings. He is customarily garbed in black tunic (open at the shoulders to accommodate his wings) and breeches, with a hat and cape of rich, blood-red silk. The cape is magical, having the ability to give forth an aura of flames (treat as a "cold version" *fire shield* that will not harm Neabaz's wings) up to four times every 24 hours at the wearer's will, each aura lasting up to three rounds as desired. Neabaz also bears a *flame tongue* blade that, when grasped, can *know alignment* of any creature pointed at, and fire 9 *magic missiles* (1 missile per spell) every 24 hours. (These items are believed to be of Prime Material Plane origin.) Neabaz carries other treasure only upon Baalzebul's business and explicit orders.

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BARBATOS (Duke of Hell)

FREQUENCY: *Unique (Very rare)*
NO. APPEARING: 1
ARMOR CLASS: -3
MOVE: 16"
HIT DICE: 122 *hit points*
% IN LAIR: 60%
TREASURE TYPE: *See below*
NO. OF ATTACKS: 2
DAMAGE/ATTACK: *By weapon type +7*
SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*
SPECIAL DEFENSES: *See below*
MAGIC RESISTANCE: 70%
INTELLIGENCE: *Exceptional*
ALIGNMENT: *Lawful evil*
SIZE: L (12' tall)
PSIONIC ABILITY: 212
Attack/Defense Modes: *All/all*

Barbatos is the marshal of Maladomini, responsible for all of Baalzebul's armies on that plane, and, through Moloch, administering also the forces of Malbolge. Authoritarian and a shrewd judge both of his warriors and of tactical problems, he has won Baalzebul's respect and limited trust. He has never displayed any personal ambitions, nor (at any time) his true feelings, so that among the hierarchy of the hells his loyalty to his master, and therefore his actions in any change of the status quo, remain unknown.

Barbatos moves with lightning speed in battle, having two weapon attacks per round. He carries treasure only upon the orders and specific business of Baalzebul, and wears a gray cloak with a green hood fringed in scarlet.

Barbatos can at will use the following spell-like powers, one at a time and once per round: *pyrotechnics, produce flame, dispel magic, detect invisibility, detect lie, detect magic, charm person, fly, know alignment, tongues, speak with animals, repulsion, wall of fire, teleport*, and (fulfill another's limited) *wish*. Once per day he can use a *symbol* of sleep, and six times per day he can cast a 4d6 *fireball*. Barbatos breathes *fear* in a cone up to 4" distant, 2" wide at its furthest extent (save vs. breath weapon to avoid). He can *summon* 1-4 malebranche with a 70% chance of success, and regenerates 2 hit points per round.

If summoned to the Prime Material Plane, Barbatos will always appear with 2-8 malebranche. On that plane, he can track as a ranger, *pass without trace*, and *move silently* if he wills; break *wizard locks* by touch; and *detect treasure* (of a metal or mineral nature, as in the *wand of metal and mineral detection*) in a 3" radius. Those who know how to *summon* him are few, because he and his malebranche guard can usually destroy them or bear them to the hells for torment.

Description: Barbatos appears as a bearded, horned man-like giant with crimson skin, black hooves, and a tail. His eyes are green, and he talks with a rich, persuasive voice.

ABIGOR (Duke of Hell)

FREQUENCY: *Unique (Very rare)*
NO. APPEARING: 1
ARMOR CLASS: -2
MOVE: 14"/22"
HIT DICE: 120 *hit points*
% IN LAIR: 65%
TREASURE TYPE: A, I
NO. OF ATTACKS: 1
DAMAGE/ATTACK: 2-16 or by weapon type +7
SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*
SPECIAL DEFENSES: *See below*
MAGIC RESISTANCE: 70%
INTELLIGENCE: *Exceptional*
ALIGNMENT: *Lawful evil*
SIZE: L (7½' tall)
PSIONIC ABILITY: 210
Attack/Defense Modes: *All/all*

Abigor is a duke in the service of Baalzebul, commanding 60 companies of malebranche. He enjoys destroying other creatures in battle, and will not miss a chance to fight a weaker opponent. He wields a +2 battleaxe and a mace, and if he loses these in a skirmish he will employ anything available. Weaponless, he strikes with one massive fist while warding off attacks with the other. A blow from his hand does 2-16 damage.

Abigor can use the following spell-like powers, one at a time and once per round: *pyrotechnics, produce flame, animate dead, dispel magic, speak with dead* (who can have been dead for up to 600 days), *detect invisibility, detect magic, know alignment, tongues, teleport*, and (fulfill another's limited) *wish*. Once per day Abigor can employ a *symbol* of *stunning*, and once per day he can *spell turn* (as in *ring of spell turning*) a spell cast at him back at the caster (note that he can do this even with a spell that his magic resistance has protected him from). Abigor causes *fear* by touch (save vs. spell at -1 to avoid). He can *summon* 1-2 malebranche with a 70% chance of success, and regenerates 2 hit points per round.

Description: Abigor appears as an ochre-skinned, hairless humanoid with ruddy diabolic features, small horns, black hooves, and a forked tail. He has large crimson bat-like wings, and a loud, bellowing voice.

ZEPAR (Duke of Hell)

FREQUENCY: *Unique (Very rare)*
NO. APPEARING: 1
ARMOR CLASS: -3
MOVE: 14"
HIT DICE: 118 *hit points*
% IN LAIR: 65%
TREASURE TYPE: A, P
NO. OF ATTACKS: 1
DAMAGE/ATTACK: *See below*
SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*
SPECIAL DEFENSES: *See below*
MAGIC RESISTANCE: 70%

INTELLIGENCE: *Exceptional*
ALIGNMENT: *Lawful evil*
SIZE: M (5' tall)
PSIONIC ABILITY: 217
Attack/Defense Modes: *All/all*

Zepar is a duke in the service of Baalzebul, and leads 28 companies of malebranche. Vicious and arrogant, he seldom engages in combat, but uses his magical powers and his servants to bully weaker creatures. When in a black mood, he wades into the hapless lemures and dishes out all the punishment he can deliver. He fights with a hand axe and a short sword, both envenomed like those of an erinyes (save vs. poison or faint for 1-6 melee rounds).

Zepar can employ the following spell-like powers at will, one at a time and once per round: *pyrotechnics, produce flame, animate dead, spectral force, blink, fly, detect invisibility, tongues, suggestion, teleport*, and (fulfill another's limited) *wish*. His touch can (at will) cause one of the following: *fear* (save vs. spell at -1 or cower on the spot, dropping weapons, if save fails); *lust* (cease hostilities and approach the first creature of like race and opposite sex; this effect lasts only 4 rounds and ceases in any case when the affected person is attacked — by Zepar, the intended object of his or her affections, or another); or a *shocking grasp* (11-18 points of damage). Once per day Zepar can *polymorph other* (save at -1) and once per day employ a *symbol* of *insanity*. He can *summon* 1-3 malebranche with a 70% chance of success, and regenerates 1 hit point per round.

Description: Zepar appears as a slight, dark-complexioned man dressed in scarlet armor, with a grotesque clubfoot and a forked tail. He has small horns (concealed by his helm) and speaks in a grating, contemptuous voice. Beneath his armor (without which he is AC -2) is crimson skin, and a "normal" human foot that has retractile black catlike claws (1-4 raking damage if unbooted).

8. CAINA

The frigid eighth plane of the hells is ruled by Mephistopheles, the mighty Lord of No Mercy or Cold Lord. This scheming arch-devil rules the frozen wastes of Caina with the help of his consort Baalphegor and his staff: Barbas, chamberlain of Mephistar (Mephistopheles' iron citadel) and guardian of Mephistopheles' wealth and treasures; Adonides, steward of Caina, who oversees the administration and defense of the realm; and Bele, justiciar, who sits in judgement of all disputes within Caina. Mephistopheles is cunning enough to allow the appearance of justice — and thus win the ease and resulting loyalty of his vassals, as well as reassurance for



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other devils elsewhere in the Nine Hells who might consider supporting him in a bid to overthrow Asmodeus, showing them that an independent judiciary would be installed under the rule of Mephistopheles, were he to become Overlord of Hell.

Malebranche and spined devils staff the iron citadel of Mephistar, which perches high in the icy mountains at the heart of the plane. Much of Caina is a land of ice-covered boulders and mountains, ruins of stone (for it took the devils long to learn that nothing on the glaciers could withstand the inexorable ice), and sprawling glaciers. Bifrons, one of the dukes of Caina, rules from a cold blue palace carved out of the slow-moving ice of a rift in the center of the great glacier Nargus. This glacier is staffed by the ice devils who populate the plane, and by spined devils, who perform the most menial tasks.

Mephistopheles is one of the most careful and suspicious of the arch-devils, and the halls and chambers of Mephistar are patrolled and inhabited by devils in accordance with a strict schedule of activities. Only Bele, Barbas, and Adonides are free of this iron regimentation, and Mephistopheles wants to know where they are and what they are doing at all times. All three devils delight in deceiving their lord as to precisely where they are and what they are doing, but such deceptions are always small things, for they dare go no further in light of the possible punishments.

A visitor will find Caina numbingly cold — without heat, most warm-blooded creatures can only survive for a few hours before suffering chills, later frostbite, and then death. Certainly any such creature that goes to sleep, falls unconscious, or is rendered immobile in the open without heat will die shortly. Ice devils will be immediately attracted to any fire (note that the raw materials for such a blaze will have to be brought by the visitor,

since no combustibles are to be found), and will attack without hesitation. If far from Nargus, an ice devil is not likely to inform Mephistopheles or his staff of the existence of intruders unless there is a chance that other devils have seen them too, and are likely to report them. If a party should escape a lone ice devil, the latter will not warn others of their presence, but will itself remain alert for signs of them.

Were it not for the cold and the lack of food (some tales speak of remorhaz or “glacier worms” in Caina, but if any exist they must be very rare), Caina would offer intruders many inviting places of concealment — there are many hidden valleys in the mountains, and countless ice-caves. Corpses, it should be noted, will freeze and be preserved perfectly, so killers of all sorts are advised to seek deep crevasses or snowbanks to conceal such remains.

The dukes of Caina are Hutijin, who commands two mighty legions of pit fiends, the nobles of Caina (including Silcharde, Bechard, Guland, Sphandor, and Buldumech); Bifrons, who commands 26 companies of ice devils in Nargus; and Nexroth, who leads 16 companies of malebranche. The pit fiends and malebranche dwell in the rocky spires and pits of the outermost fringes of Caina. These are hot regions crisscrossed by colder, steaming, slimy waters which at length give way to marches of icy ooze which rise at length into the frozen mountains of the plane’s interior.

The strength and ambition of the pit fiends (particularly those named above) are a weakness in Mephistopheles’ control over his own plane — a weakness encouraged and delighted in by his foes — particularly Baalzebul, who has spies among the malebranche, and seeks to foster unrest. Only a few of the pit fiends remain strictly loyal to Mephistopheles (without Hutijin, the Cold Lord would soon face open revolt and could not hold

the plane). Most seek to gain the most power they can in any change of rulership, and favor dissent and change among the arch-devils as the only way to better their own lot. None have openly defied Mephistopheles yet, but a time will come . . . unless, of course, Mephistopheles defeats Asmodeus, whereupon their loyalty will be loudly conspicuous. Mephistopheles is openly distrustful of Nexroth, who is totally selfish and loyal only to himself; he will do whatever seems best for his own advancement. Nexroth retains his command only because he seems the most reliable of the pit fiends, and Mephistopheles dares not allow open conflict within Caina for fear that another arch-devil would take advantage of the situation. If not for this, the Cold Lord would cheerfully shift the command whenever it suited him, playing the pit fiends off against one another indefinitely.

BAALPHEGOR (Princess of Hell)

FREQUENCY: *Unique (Very rare)*

NO. APPEARING: 1

ARMOR CLASS: -2

MOVE: 19"/29"

HIT DICE: 82 *hit points*

% IN LAIR: 90%

TREASURE TYPE: R, X, Z

NO. OF ATTACKS: 1

DAMAGE/ATTACK: 2-12

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: *See below*

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 80%

INTELLIGENCE: *Supra-genius*

ALIGNMENT: *Lawful evil*

SIZE: *M (5½' tall)*

PSIONIC ABILITY: 229

Attack/Defense Modes: *All/all*

Baalphegor is consort to Mephistopheles, and a most highly regarded she-devil. Personally attractive (and a practiced diplomat), she is charming in



manner and artful in thought; she has invented many of the strategies and devices used in the hells. Asmodeus regards her as one of his most valuable assets, and tolerates the machinations of Mephistopheles largely because of her. Baalphegor's own desires are seldom revealed; she appears loyal to the hells and devoted to Mephistopheles, and manages to avoid making a distinction between the two.

Baalphegor can use the following spell-like powers, one at a time and once per round: *pyrotechnics*, *produce flame*, *animate dead*, *dispel magic*, *charm person*, *suggestion*, *detect invisibility*, *enchant an item*, *permanency*, *teleport*, and (fulfill another's limited) *wish*. Once per day Baalphegor can employ a *finger of death*, once per day unleash *chain lightning*, and once per day *heal* herself. She causes *fear* (2" range) by pointing at the desired creature (save vs. spell at -2 to avoid). She can *summon* 1-2 devils with a 75% chance of success. Baalphegor regenerates 1 point of damage every 4 rounds.

Description: Baalphegor is a musical-voiced, beautiful female, apparently human, save for her ruby-red eyes, forked tail, and slim, delicate leathery wings. Her feet are human in appearance, and she is sleek and curvaceous, with cinnamon-brown skin. She appears young and carefree, but when angered her light voice can crack like a whip, and her eyes flash fire.

BELE (Duke of Hell)

FREQUENCY: *Unique (Very rare)*
NO. APPEARING: 1
ARMOR CLASS: -3
MOVE: 14"/20"
HIT DICE: 112 *hit points*
% IN LAIR: 95%
TREASURE TYPE: Nil
NO. OF ATTACKS: 1
DAMAGE/ATTACK: *By weapon type +8*
SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: *See below*
MAGIC RESISTANCE: 70%
INTELLIGENCE: *Genius*
ALIGNMENT: *Lawful evil*
SIZE: M (6' tall)
PSIONIC ABILITY: 232
Attack/Defense Modes: *All/all*

Bele serves Mephistopheles as justiciar of Caina, spending most of his time in the fortress of Mephistar, dispensing impartial justice within the Cold Lord's realm. Some in Caina (among the pit fiends) openly doubt if Bele's justice is impartial — but it is true that Mephistopheles does not intervene on a case-by-case basis to overrule or influence his judgements. Mephistopheles and Bele do agree upon (and periodically discuss) the basic principles and some specific details of what precisely "justice," in Caina, is and should be. As a result, Bele's judgments are opposed to any rebellious or disorderly actions, although they occasionally stand against Mephistopheles' orders. Perhaps the most important fact in the matter is that Bele would not have his present office without the permission of Mephistopheles; if Bele's judgments ever run too much against his master's will, that office will end. Bele has no real treasure, on Mephistopheles' orders.

Bele can use the following spell-like powers at will, one at a time and once per round: *pyrotechnics*, *produce flame*, *ice storm*, *ESP*, *detect lie*, *know alignment*, *tongues*, *read magic*, *read languages*, *hold person*, *hold monster*, *fools gold*, *legend lore*, *teleport*, and (fulfill another's limited) *wish*. Twice per day he can cause a *flame strike*, and once per day he can *banish* (as in the spell *banishment*) a creature (or creatures) of up to 16 levels or hit dice to its own plane. Bele causes *fear* by voice tone in a 6" radius (save vs. spell at -3 to avoid). He can *summon* 1-3 ice devils (60% chance of success), or 1-2 pit fiends (30%). Bele regenerates 1 hit point per round.

Description: Bele appears as a tall, handsome, hollow-eyed man with ivory skin, a curling beard and pencil-thin mustache, a low, nasal voice, tiny horns, and long black robes. Beneath the robes are concealed a short forked tail, a crimson-skinned lower torso, and a belt bearing Bele's black rod of office (equivalent to a *rod of smiting*) and a *dagger of venom*. When Bele disrobes, his leathery wings can spread to a surprisingly large (20') wingspan.

ADONIDES (Duke of Hell)

FREQUENCY: *Unique (Very rare)*
NO. APPEARING: 1
ARMOR CLASS: -2
MOVE: 16"/28"
HIT DICE: 121 *hit points*
% IN LAIR: 55%
TREASURE TYPE: R, X, Z
NO. OF ATTACKS: 2
DAMAGE/ATTACK: *By weapon type +7*
SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*
SPECIAL DEFENSES: *See below*
MAGIC RESISTANCE: 70%
INTELLIGENCE: *Exceptional*
ALIGNMENT: *Lawful evil*
SIZE: L (8' tall)
PSIONIC ABILITY: 228
Attack/Defense Modes: *All/all*

Adonides serves Mephistopheles as the steward of Caina, responsible for the security and internal stability of the realm. His experiences thus far have made him mistrust all pit fiends (even watching the dukes Nexroth and Hutijin with a wary eye), and to suspect every ice devil and malebranche of being a spy for Baalzebul. Adonides is naturally cruel and high-handed, and — since Barbas is chamberlain of Mephistar, and the steward has no authority there — the steward of Caina spends much of his time roaming the plane with a guard of 16 ice devils, searching for and punishing intruders

and those who misbehave or act to betray Mephistopheles. In battle Adonides bears a twisted, spiked +1 staff (1-8 +1 damage, +7 if Adonides wields it) with which he can strike twice (against 2 different targets, if he so wishes) in a round.

Adonides can use the following spell-like powers, one at a time and once per round: *pyrotechnics*, *produce flame*, *ice storm*, *wall of ice*, *cone of cold* (1d4 + 16 damage), *lightning bolt* (4d6), *detect lie*, *know alignment*, *dispel magic*, *teleport*, and (fulfill another's limited) *wish*. Once per day Adonides can *heal* himself (or another, by touch), and once per day he can use a *symbol of stunning*. He causes *fear* by pointing at the desired creature (one target per round; save vs. spell at -1 to avoid), and can *summon* 1-6 ice devils (70% chance of success) when desired. He regenerates 2 hit points per round.

Description: Adonides appears as a young, long-haired, darkly handsome man of giant stature. He has unusual glittering black eyes and a fanged grin. The hair hides two small horns; Adonides wears robes to hide his short forked tail and scarlet torso.

BARBAS (Duke of Hell)

FREQUENCY: *Unique (Very rare)*

NO. APPEARING: 1

ARMOR CLASS: -3

MOVE: 16"

HIT DICE: 110 *hit points*

% IN LAIR: 95%

TREASURE TYPE: R, X, Z

NO. OF ATTACKS: 2

DAMAGE/ATTACK: *By weapon type +7*

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: *See below*

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 65%

INTELLIGENCE: *Exceptional*

ALIGNMENT: *Lawful evil*

SIZE: L (10' tall)

PSIONIC ABILITY: 224

Attack/Defense Modes: *All/all*

Barbas serves Mephistopheles as chamberlain, running the citadel of Mephistar and seeing to the security of Mephistopheles' treasure. Proud and arrogant, Barbas is as openly cruel as any devil in Caina is allowed to be under the rule of Mephistopheles. Totally unscrupulous and dishonest, Barbas is kept in check — and the treasure in his care where it is supposed to be — by the combined scrutiny of Bele, Adonides, and Mephistopheles himself. He retains his position by the brilliant deceptions he practices in the name of security, catching or misdirecting the spies of other arch-devils and deflecting the greed of those native to Caina. Barbas is lazy and gross-bodied, but snake-quick in battle, and attacks twice per round with his *staff of striking*. He also bears a goad, which is an iron

rod topped with a hook at one end. It was fashioned by a chaotic good smith, and does 4-24 damage to devils and other LE creatures, but only 2-8 damage to others (of S or M size; only 1-6 vs. L). Barbas also bears a *dagger of venom* (perhaps more than one) hidden about his person.

Barbas can employ the following spell-like powers, one at a time and once per round: *pyrotechnics*, *produce flame*, *wall of ice*, *lightning bolt* (2d6), *detect lie*, *ESP*, *tongues*, *hold person*, *shield*, *teleport*, and (fulfill another's limited) *wish*. Once per day Barbas can use a *symbol of insanity*, and once per day he can *slay living* (by touch; saving throw at +1). Barbas causes *fear* by eye contact (at will, one victim per round, 4" effective range). He can *summon* 1-3 ice devils (60% chance of success), or 2-8 spined devils (70%). He regenerates 1 hit point per round.

Description: Barbas appears as a giant, bearded man with large lips and an enormous belly. He wears voluminous robes, which conceal his forked tail, hooves, and crimson skin covered with thick, oily black hair.

BIFRONS (Duke of Hell)

FREQUENCY: *Unique (Very rare)*

NO. APPEARING: 1

ARMOR CLASS: -3

MOVE: 18"

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Description: Bifrons appears as a wingless, gray-skinned and heavily muscled devil with stubby horns on his brow, a humanoid torso, and a snake-like lower body (from the hip down, with no legs). He has totally white, slanted eyes, large nostrils and mouth, and a deep, rumbling voice.

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9. NESSUS

The vast and gloomy ninth and nethermost plane of the hells is known as Nessus, or Cocytus (after the lake therein), and is the personal realm of Asmodeus, Overlord of the hells. Asmodeus inhabits a grand palace, a fey court of darksome beauty, which rests upon the floor of the lowest rift in Nessus. If this abode has a name, it is little used and unknown to men. It is known that smoke rises from its very stones when they are trod by one not of lawful evil alignment, and that Asmodeus has gathered here all objects that he finds beautiful (including much seen as beautiful by man).

It is known that Asmodeus can *summon* each arch-devil to his court here, once a year, but more details of his palace are few indeed, understandably, since few travelers return whole to the Prime Material Plane after being in the clutches of the Great Devil himself. All manner of beings may be found within its extensive halls, for Asmodeus, a master strategist, makes use of all the powers and talents available in the hells to further his own ends. His bodyguards and personal servants are the mighty pit fiends; outside of the palace, one is more likely to encounter them in Nessus than any other creature, for they are constantly flying here and there at the Overlord's bidding.

Knowledge of the geography of Nessus

is similarly incomplete and possibly inaccurate, but it is known to be a rocky, misty realm that holds many dangers for the unwary.

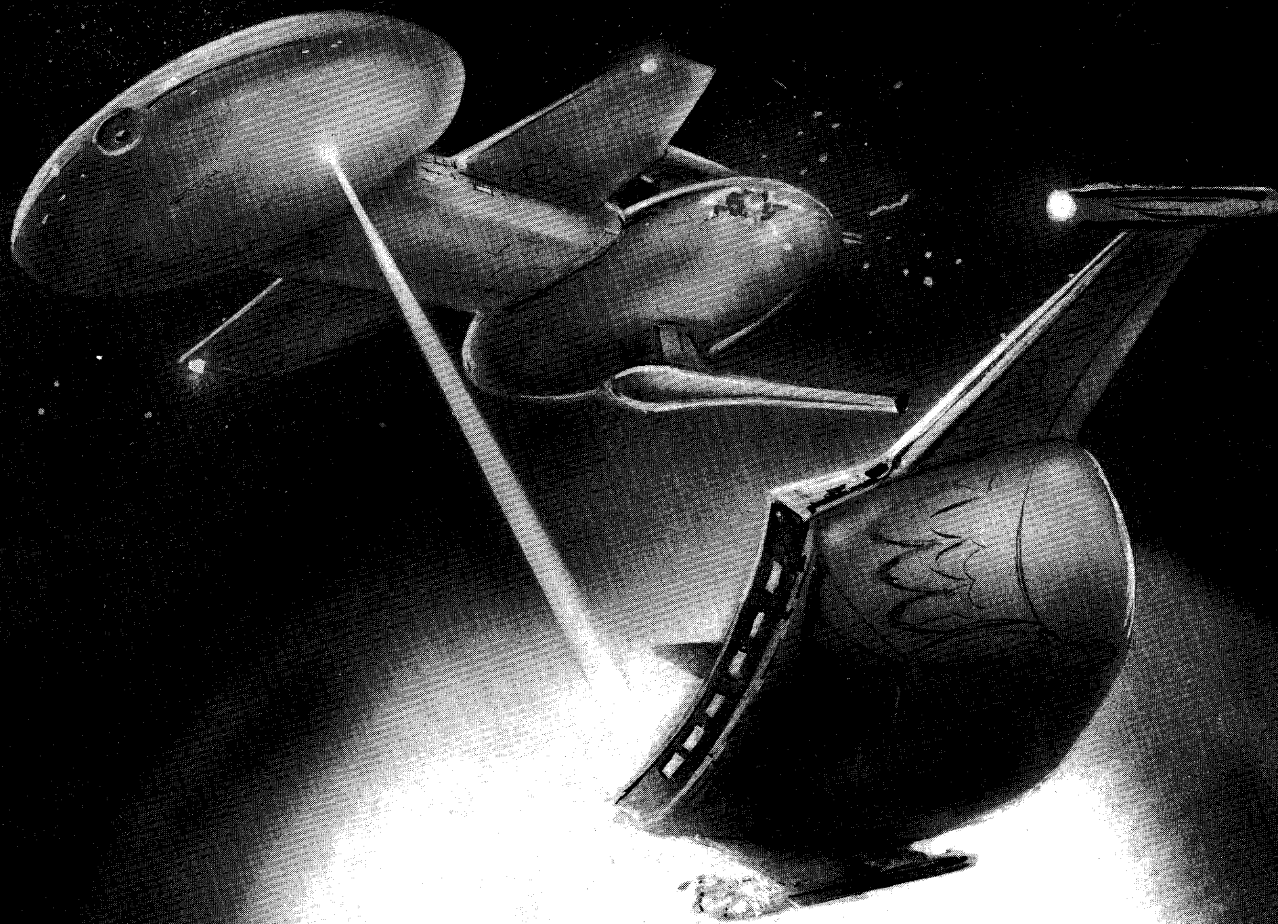
Lethe, the river of forgetfulness, winds aimlessly about Nessus; no mortal has ever found its source or outflow. All creatures who touch its clear green waters (except devils, who are immune to Lethe's power) must save vs. poison or be permanently *feble-minded* (only a *wish*, *alter reality*, or *limited wish* will reverse this), and even if cured, victims will lose all memories of the time preceding their cure. Some say that the river Lethe flows through dimensional space in some incomprehensible way, and thereby also flows on the Prime Material Plane. It may thus provide another entry and exit to the deepest plane of the hells — but if any have traveled this route and survived, they do not talk of it.

The lake of Cocytus lies far from the palace of the Overlord, high up in a bowl of rock surrounded by crags. It is frozen; a glassy-smooth surface of ice tens of feet thick — and within the ice are trapped the bodies of all who have ever ventured across it, for the ice always rises suddenly, in jaws, to engulf them. A *dispel magic* or slow will slow this action enough for a creature to escape or be helped clear, in haste, and a *wall of force* or even a *wall of ice* will temporarily jam the jaws open and also permit escape. A *shatter* spell or

the physical force wielded by most creatures will not affect the ice, but a *crystal-brittle* spell cast upon it will render the ice fragile (to the extent of the spell's area of effect), subject to the effects of all normal weapons and implements, and a *hammer of thunderbolts* will shatter it easily (perhaps also damaging a trapped victim). Any magical and/or natural combination of strength equal to a storm giant's (such as the natural might of Asmodeus or Geryon) can affect the ice of Cocytus.

On the slopes between the crags that surround the Lake of Fear (Cocytus) and the winding river Lethe stands a huge wood of trees whose leaves are always burning, but are not consumed by the flames. A blazing branch taken from one of these trees will burn — equal in heat and fire effects to a normal blaze, doing 1-4 points of burn damage per contact — ceaselessly, even if taken to another plane. Water, cold, winds, lack of air, etc., will not douse it, nor will water- or cold-related spells. Nothing short of a *limited wish* will douse it while in the hells; outside the hells, a *dispel magic* or contact with the area of effect of a *protection from evil* (for such a branch is strongly evil) will extinguish it forever, but *affect normal fires* will have no effect. If a branch is broken off, it will bleed, yielding a small quantity of blue-green ichor, a substance fabled in magical lore as an

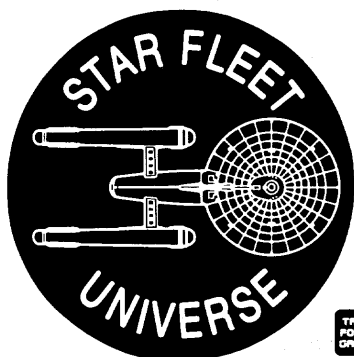
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ingredient in many potions, spell inks, and processes for the making of magical items.

Within the course of the river Lethe is the central area of Nessus, a region of twisted and scorched rock broken by many rifts and knife-edged ridges, and within this area the firewinds sweep. A *firewind* is a permanent *wall of fire* (as in the spell) of triple strength and damage, typically up to a quarter of a mile in length, that sweeps over the ground in the forefront of a howling wind (26" movement rate). The firewinds blow at random, and may join or break apart in accordance with the topography of the land or for no apparent reason. Usually they will sweep over a creature on the ground in a single round, enveloping it briefly for 4-24 points of damage (save for half damage). Loose garments, small birds, and so forth may be blown away with the firewind, but in its wake there is relative calm. The bones of many creatures litter this inner desolation of Nessus, and a traveler will find that the rifts grow deeper as one heads inward, so that the bottom of the lowest plane of the hells is a huge bowl or gulf. Here the air is always smoky, and the firewinds howl, and here, at the bottom of the lowest rift (where the firewinds do not reach, but pass overhead) is the infernally grand palace of Asmodeus. Some sages say that in the center of the palace is a great *gate* that will allow transport from this place to any plane (of the user's choice) in the multiverse. This gate, they say, will allow passage of any number or amount of creatures and objects, and Asmodeus cannot destroy it or affect its operation. (Devils and other creatures of lawful evil alignment attempting to use it, regardless of power, will be destroyed.) Some believe that the Overlord deliberately built his palace atop it so as to control access to and from the hells; somewhere in the Prime Material Plane, it is hinted, lies the way into the Nine Hells via this gate. The existence of this gate is supported by the legend that to escape the hells, one must descend to the deepest part of the plane. The maker of the gate is unknown, but is probably one or more of the greater gods.

Asmodeus rarely leaves his palace, making his will known and acted upon by servants of apparently unshakeable loyalty. Adramalech serves him as chancellor, recording the numbers, acquisitions, and transformations of the lemures and larvae, torments suffered by devils, the names of those who serve the diabolic on other planes, and the making and terms of all pacts and contracts. The Keeper of the Records answers to no one but the Overlord himself, and has his own tower in the palace, ringed at all times by six pit fiends. This guard detail is ordered by the pit fiend Baalberith, major domo of the palace, probably at the behest of Asmodeus, and is little liked by Adramalech. A similar guard rings the

chamber or person of Bensozia, consort to Asmodeus, at all times. Another 54 pit fiends round out the palace guard.

Phongor is the most feared devil in Nessus, after Asmodeus himself; he serves Asmodeus as inquisitor, and little information escapes his probing questions and methods of persuasion.

The greatest pit fiend of all, the awesomely scarred, broken-winged Alastor, serves Asmodeus as executioner. His strength is that of a storm giant's, and he never speaks. It is said in the hells that if all were swept away and Asmodeus could choose but one devil as a companion, that one would be neither consort nor lieutenant, but Alastor the Grim.

Another pit fiend, Martinet, is constable of Nessus, responsible for the personal armies of Asmodeus. These armies camp eternally around the palace, and their generals confer often with the Overlord. These proud dukes are: Buer, who commands 15 companies of pit fiends; Morax, leader of nine such companies; Bune, general of 30 companies of malebranche; Rimmon, head of five companies of ice devils; and Zagum, leader of 30 companies of barbed devils. It is said that the nycadaemon Daerith once appeared unannounced over the lake of Cocytus and flew toward the palace of Asmodeus, and before it reached the crags about the lake was destroyed utterly, torn apart bodily by pit fiends on patrol. With such guardians, it is small wonder why the mysteries of the plane are so many, and the visitors who return whence they came so few.

BENSOZIA (Queen of Hell)

FREQUENCY: *Unique (Very rare)*

NO. APPEARING: 1

ARMOR CLASS: -2

MOVE: 18"/26"

HIT DICE: 86 *hit points*

% IN LAIR: 95%

TREASURE TYPE: C, R, X

NO. OF ATTACKS: 1

DAMAGE/ATTACK: 2-12

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: *See below*

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 80%

INTELLIGENCE: *Genius*

ALIGNMENT: *Lawful evil*

SIZE: M (6' tall)

PSIONIC ABILITY: 261

Attack/Defense Modes: *All/all*

Bensozia is the consort of Asmodeus, and staunchly supports her mate. She is personally the most powerful of the consorts, but her influence is entirely linked with that of Asmodeus; it is said that "Bensozia speaks not, save by the leave of the Great One." Bensozia seems happy in her position, although she is not always physically with Asmodeus, but her natural manner is coldly polite and haughty, seldom revealing her true feelings. She

bears a brass scepter that does 4-16 damage to all creatures of good alignment, 3-12 damage to devils, and 2-8 damage to others. Empty-handed, she strikes with her hands for 2-12 damage.

Bensozia can use the following spell-like powers at will, once per round and only one at a time: *pyrotechnics*, *produce flame*, *animate dead*, *fireball* (3d6), *lightning bolt* (2d6), *dispel magic*, *charm person*, *charm monster*, *suggestion*, *ESP*, *detect invisibility*, *detect magic*, *identify*, *sending* (to Asmodeus only), *teleport*, and (fulfill another's *limited*) *wish*. Twice per day Bensozia can employ a *finger of death*, and once per day *heal* herself. She causes *fear* (6" range) by speaking to an individual (save vs. spell at -2 to avoid), and can *summon* 1-2 pit fiends (50% chance), or 1-4 malebranche (30% chance). Bensozia regenerates 1 point of damage every 3 rounds.

Description: Bensozia is a tall statuesque, human-appearing devil. She has long white hair, large glistening black eyes, scarlet skin, large brown hooves, and a forked tail. She always wears loose black robes with a scarlet silk lining within, and, as Queen of Hell, a diadem of beaten gold set with large rubies (total value 26,000 gp).

ADRAMALECH (Chancellor of Hell)

FREQUENCY: *Unique (Very rare)*

NO. APPEARING: 1

ARMOR CLASS: -1

MOVE: 14"

HIT DICE: 133 *hit points*

% IN LAIR: 90%

TREASURE TYPE: I, S, Z

NO. OF ATTACKS: 1

DAMAGE/ATTACK: *By weapon type +6*

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: *See below*

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 75%

INTELLIGENCE: *Genius*

ALIGNMENT: *Lawful evil*

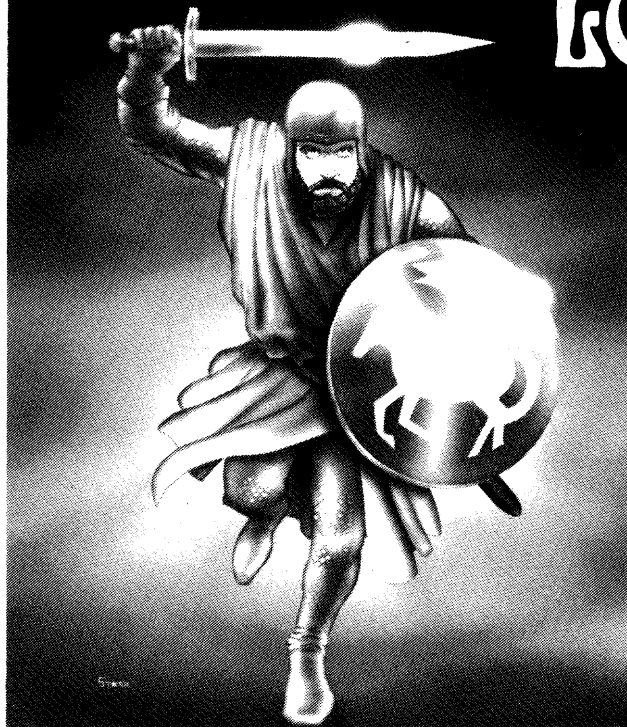
SIZE: M (6' tall)

PSIONIC ABILITY: 245

Attack/Defense Modes: *All/all*

Adramalech, the cruel and malicious Chancellor of Hell, aids Asmodeus greatly from his tower in the Overlord's palace in Nessus. The Keeper of Records answers only to Asmodeus, and spends much of his time observing (through his spies and openly recognized informants, the latter including all pit fiends in the hierarchy of the hells) events in the infernal regions and elsewhere. The Infernal Records (sometimes called "The Book of Fire" by men, although the records actually take up many folios and papers) contain all true names of devils known to Adramalech (note that he has memorized those of all dukes and arch-devils in self-defense; thus, none will attack him). He also records the numbers, acquisitions,

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and transformations of lemures and larvae; torments suffered by devils; the ranks and powers of all devils and suspected or known alliance or deceptions among them; the names, ranks, and locations of all who serve the devils on other planes; and the making and terms of all pacts and contracts.

When not engaged in updating the records or keeping an ear to the ground, Adramalech likes to amuse himself by watching weaker creatures — particularly humans and elves brought from the Prime Material Plane — being tortured and slain by devils in the dungeons of the palace or in the encampments of the infernal armies outside its walls. Adramalech carries a +2 staff which can *slay living* (save at +1) by touch, and *disintegrate* (devils save at -1) by touch once in every 6 turns. His loyalty to Asmodeus is not entire — he often tries to conceal small items of information or magical items seized from intruders from the Overlord, under the guise of absent-mindedness.

Adramalech can employ the following spell-like powers at will, one at a time and once per round: *pyrotechnics*, *produce flame*, *wall of fire*, *fireball* (3d6), *dispel magic*, *detect lie*, *detect magic*, *detect invisibility*, *ESP*, *know alignment*, *read magic*, *read languages*, *tongues*, *write*, *explosive runes*, *animate dead*, *sending* (to Asmodeus only), *teleport*, *identify*, *anti-magic shell*, and (fulfill

another's *limited*) *wish*. Once per day Adramalech can unleash a *meteor swarm*, and once per day he can use a *symbol of insanity*. He causes *fear* by pointing at a creature within 4" and speaking (save vs. spell at -1 to avoid). He can *summon* 1-3 pit fiends (55% chance) or 1-6 malebranche (50% chance). Adramalech regenerates 1 hit point every round.

Description: Adramalech appears as an aged, gray-bearded and balding man, with cold, wet eyes that change hue from emerald green through black to fiery orange depending upon his mood (enjoyment to fury, respectively). He has normal human feet and hands, small crimson barbed horns and a crimson forked tail. He wears loose, flowing robes of green, purple, russet, or black, and beneath these is a humanoid body that is crimson and scaly down the back, and yellow-green and slimy down the front.

PHONGOR (Inquisitor of Hell)

FREQUENCY: *Unique (Very rare)*

NO. APPEARING: 1

ARMOR CLASS: -1

MOVE: 16"

HIT DICE: 129 *hit points*

% IN LAIR: 80%

TREASURE TYPE: Q(x2), Z

NO. OF ATTACKS: 1

DAMAGE/ATTACK: *By weapon type +5*

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: *See below*

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 80%

INTELLIGENCE: *Genius*

ALIGNMENT: *Lawful evil*

SIZE: M (6' tall)

PSIONIC ABILITY: 249

Attack/Defense Modes: *All/all*

Phongor is the dreaded Inquisitor of Hell; he is responsible directly to Asmodeus for the provision of complete and accurate news of the hells and other planes. To do this, he has subverted the spies of Adramalech (so that they report first, and most fully, to him), enlisted spies of his own (and spies to watch his spies; he trusts no one), and perfected the arts of torture on devils, the lesser creatures of the hells, and intruders alike. Little escapes his arts, and "few return whole in body or mind from Phongor's gentle grasp," as it is said in the hells. In the depths of the palace of the Overlord, Phongor employs many delicate and brutal instruments of torture. While in the palace, he will always have two pit fiends as bodyguards and 6-11 servant spined devils.

In battle Phongor can employ any weapon without "to hit" or damage penalties, but he favors his envenomed whip (see the listing for erinyes in the Monster Manual for effects of the venom). The weapon is a cat-of-nine-tails with tempered wire, rather than cord, as its strands. Each strand does 1-4 points base

damage, and all nine strands are capable of striking the same target in the same round. Phongor himself can feel no pain, and thus is unaffected by attacks until physically disabled.

Phongor can use the following spell-like powers at will, one at a time and once per round: *pyrotechnics*, *produce flame*, *fireball* (2d6), *lightning bolt* (2d6), *wall of fire*, *animate dead*, *dispel magic*, *detect lie*, *know alignment*, *ESP*, *tongues*, *detect invisibility*, *identify*, *sending* (to Asmodeus only), *teleport*, and (fulfill another's *limited*) *wish*. By touch, Phongor can either *cause disease* (see DMG for diseases), *putrefy food & drink*, or attack with a *shocking grasp*. He can choose from these three effects freely and change between them without limit. Six times per day he can use a *symbol of pain*, and thrice a day he can *heal* himself or another (by touch). Once per day he can employ *true seeing* (lasts for 1-12 rounds, as he wills, but is ended immediately if he uses another of the above powers). Phongor radiates *fear* in a 4" radius at will (save at -2 to avoid; this power affects even devils below the rank of duke). He can *summon* 1-2 pit fiends (60% chance) or 1-6 spined devils (65% chance). Phongor regenerates 1 hit point per round.

Description: Phongor appears as a dead-white skinned man with glittering pink eyes, a hoarse, hissing voice, tiny horns and oily black hair, a forked tail, and red hooves. He wears open purple or black robes, and a belt to carry his whip.

BUER (Duke of Hell)

FREQUENCY: *Unique (Very rare)*

NO. APPEARING: 1

ARMOR CLASS: -2

MOVE: 22"

HIT DICE: 126 *hit points*

% IN LAIR: 90%

TREASURE TYPE: H, Q(x4)

NO. OF ATTACKS: *See below*

DAMAGE/ATTACK: *See below*

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: *See below*

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 70%

INTELLIGENCE: *Exceptional*

ALIGNMENT: *Lawful evil*

SIZE: L (10' long)

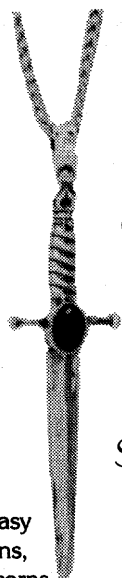
PSIONIC ABILITY: 226

Attack/Defense Modes: *All/all*

Buer is a duke in the service of Asmodeus, commanding 15 companies of pit fiends. He is inclined to melancholy demeanor and, although always polite in speech, appears to delight in practical jokes. It should be remembered, however, that his words and actions are perfectly controlled, and are generally intended to further a specific aim or purpose. His loyalty to Asmodeus has never been questioned, and he keeps a careful eye on the whereabouts and activities of his forces.

Buer can use the following spell-like

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powers, one at a time and once per round: *pyrotechnics*, *produce flame*, *flame arrow* (by touch), *animate dead*, *lightning bolt* (4d6), *dispel magic*, *fly*, *remove* (or *bestow*) *curse* (by touch), *find familiar* (for another; imps only), *cure* (or *cause*) *disease* (by touch), *detect invisibility*, *detect magic*, *know alignment*, *teleport*, and (fulfill another's limited) *wish*. Twice per day he can cause a *flame strike*, and once per day he can use a *symbol of hopelessness* or one of *discord*. He causes *fear* by his bellow (6" effective range; save vs. spell to avoid), and can *summon* 1-3 pit fiends (70% chance). Buer regenerates 2 hit points per round.

Description: Buer resembles a centaur (human torso with arms, horse's body) with gleaming silver skin and white hair. He has staring red eyes and red horns, and his four hooves are cloven and have crimson fetlocks. He wears a belt about his body, carrying a +2 mace and a +1 bow; the belt also carries four quivers (two on each side) containing 20 arrows each. He can *flame arrow* and fire such a shaft in one round, or fire two arrows, or strike twice with his mace.

From Buer's hips (that is, the upper portion of his back, just above the forelegs) protrude six 10'-long prehensile tentacles, which have no strength to grip but can flail at any opponents (up to six separate targets) within 1". Each tentacle slaps for 2-8 corrosive, stinging acidic

damage per strike. Each tentacle can withstand 6 cumulative points of damage before being severed. Note that Buer will regenerate damage to these along with the rest of his body.

BUNE (Duke of Hell)

FREQUENCY: *Unique (Very rare)*

NO. APPEARING: 1

ARMOR CLASS: -3

MOVE: 12"/18"

HIT DICE: 136 hit points

% IN LAIR: 90%

TREASURE TYPE: I, Q(x10), W, Z

NO. OF ATTACKS: 2

DAMAGE/ATTACK: 2-5 or by weapon type +8

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: *See below*

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 70%

INTELLIGENCE: *Exceptional*

ALIGNMENT: *Lawful evil*

SIZE: L (12' tall)

PSIONIC ABILITY: 229

Attack/Defense Modes: *All/all*

Bune is a duke in the service of Asmodeus, commanding 30 companies of malebranche. He is greedy (fond of material wealth) and enjoys manipulating lesser beings of all sorts (including his warriors). His loyalty to Asmodeus is solid, but he is naturally "cheeky" to and

defiant of all beings of whom he is scared (in other words, those stronger than himself). Asmodeus tolerates this because of all the dukes, Bune is the quickest and most careful in the execution of his orders. Bune is content with his position, sees Asmodeus as the most powerful arch-devil and thus the safest lord, and will not betray him.

Bune can use the following spell-like powers at will, one at a time and once per round: *pyrotechnics*, *produce flame*, *animate dead*, *dispel magic*, *detect invisibility*, *detect magic*, *tongues*, *locate object*, *flaming sphere*, *magic missile* (6 missiles per spell), *teleport*, and (fulfill another's limited) *wish*. Once per day Bune can cast a *cone of cold* (9d4 +9), once per day *heal* himself, and once per day use a *symbol of death*. Bune causes *fear* (save vs. spell at -2 to avoid) by touch, and can *summon* 1-4 malebranche (70% chance of success) or a pit fiend (40% chance of success) to his aid. Bune regenerates 2 hit points per round.

Description: Bune appears as a malebranche, except that his scaled body is green in hue (coppery on the belly and loins), and his talons are silvery in color. Bune's head, however, is human — with dog-like furry ears and a great griffon-like beak. His voice is high-pitched and lilting, although he will screech if he becomes infuriated, and he is an excellent mimic of other beings.

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Bune fights with a saw-edged sword, shaped somewhat like a leaping flame (2-8 base damage), and a trident. He bears the sword and any treasure (in a pouch) by means of a belt, but rarely wears any other clothing. Bune's bite does 2-5 damage; if he is unarmed, his claws do 2-8 damage each, but he will snatch up a weapon at any opportunity.

MORAX (Duke of Hell)

FREQUENCY: *Unique (Very rare)*

NO. APPEARING: 1

ARMOR CLASS: -3

MOVE: 12"/16"

HIT DICE: 135 *hit points*

% IN LAIR: 90%

TREASURE TYPE: H, I, Y

NO. OF ATTACKS: 2

DAMAGE/ATTACK: 3-12/3-12

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: *See below*

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 75%

INTELLIGENCE: *Exceptional*

ALIGNMENT: *Lawful evil*

SIZE: L (12' tall)

PSIONIC ABILITY: 223

Attack/Defense Modes: *All/all*

Morax is a duke in the service of Asmodeus, leading nine companies of pit fiends. He is a being of few (and well-chosen) words, but exults in a good fight.

He often wrestles with the pit fiends under his command, hurling them about and roaring. He is respected by the pit fiends for his fairness to them and his loyalty to Asmodeus. He despises weakness, and is angered by creatures who bluff or presume to have a strength or station they do not possess or deserve. Morax respects Bifrons, Geryon, Asmodeus, and other physically strong devils, and has little time for "sneaks" or those who "hide behind magic" (for example, Phongor and Adramalech, in Nessus). Morax and Alastor are good friends, and will aid each other when one is in need, knowledge of the situation and opportunity permitting.

Morax can use the following spell-like powers, one at a time and once per round: *pyrotechnics, produce flame, fireball* (2d6), *dispel magic, detect invisibility, detect magic, teleport*, and (fulfill another's limited) *wish*. Once per day he can cause *earthquake*, and once per day use a *symbol of stunning*. He causes *fear* by touch (save vs. spell at -2 to avoid), and can *summon* 1-3 pit fiends (75% chance) at will. Morax regenerates 2 hit points per round.

Description: Morax is a cloven-hooved, humanoid devil. He has a bull-like head, with massive curved horns (somewhat like Moloch), bat-like wings, and heavily muscled arms. He has a short forked tail. His entire body is a dark, dirty brown in hue, and his eyes are scarlet. He has a cluster of 2-inch-long spines on his chest, and in battle loves to hug victims against this cluster (piercing and crushing damage of 4-24 points per round). He prefers to fight by hurling two throwing axes and then closing with opponents to use his hands (3-12 each). If he wields a weapon (a rare thing), Morax does damage by weapon type +7.

RIMMON (Duke of Hell)

FREQUENCY: *Unique (Very rare)*

NO. APPEARING: 1

ARMOR CLASS: -4

MOVE: 9"

HIT DICE: 125 *hit points*

% IN LAIR: 90%

TREASURE TYPE: Q(x6), R

NO. OF ATTACKS: 3

DAMAGE/ATTACK: 2-8/2-8/4-16

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: *See below*

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 65%

INTELLIGENCE: *Exceptional*

ALIGNMENT: *Lawful evil*

SIZE: L (12' tall)

PSIONIC ABILITY: 224

Attack/Defense Modes: *All/all*

Rimmon is a duke serving Asmodeus. He leads five companies of ice devils in battle, and appears as an ice devil with a handsome, human-like diabolic horned head. He is nasty and sarcastic and little

liked in the hells, but he is loyal to Asmodeus and has little personal pride. Rimmon rarely fights with a trident, getting 2 attacks per round, one for weapon damage +6 and the other 4-16 for his tail. Unarmed, he does 2-8 damage with each set of claws plus 4-16 for his tail.

Rimmon can use the following spell-like powers, one at a time and once per round: *pyrotechnics, produce flame, fly, dispel magic, detect invisibility, detect magic, wall of ice, ice storm, cone of cold* (5d4 +5 damage), *lightning bolt* (4d6 damage), *teleport*, and (fulfill another's limited) *wish*. Twice per day he can unleash *chain lightning* (7d6), and once per day he can use a *symbol of pain*. Rimmon radiates *fear* in a 2" radius at will, has 60' *infravision*, and regenerates 2 hit points per round.

ZAGUM (Duke of Hell)

FREQUENCY: *Unique (Very rare)*

NO. APPEARING: 1

ARMOR CLASS: -2

MOVE: 12"

HIT DICE: 127 *hit points*

% IN LAIR: 85%

TREASURE TYPE: C, P

NO. OF ATTACKS: 3

DAMAGE/ATTACK: 3-12/3-12/4-16

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: *See below*

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 65%

INTELLIGENCE: *Exceptional*

ALIGNMENT: *Lawful evil*

SIZE: L (16' tall)

PSIONIC ABILITY: 228

Attack/Defense Modes: *All/all*

Zagum is a duke serving Asmodeus, and commands 30 companies of barbed devils. He is ambitious and cold-blooded, but considers cruelty a self-indulgent waste of time, whereas humor (laughing with fellow devils) pays dividends in terms of comradeship, mutual aid, respect, and cooperation. Therefore Zagum has a sense of humor, if a coarse one, and is constantly inventing jokes or stunts that amuse rather than harm.

Zagum can use the following spell-like powers, one at a time and once per round: *pyrotechnics, produce flame, wall of fire, dispel magic, hold person, hold monster, fly, teleport*, and (fulfill another's limited) *wish*. Twice per day he can cause a *flame strike*, and once per day employ a *symbol of pain*. He causes *fear* by gaze (1" effective range, save vs. spell at -2 to avoid), and can *summon* 1-4 barbed devils (75% chance of success) as desired. Zagum regenerates 2 hit points per round.

Description: Zagum appears as a gigantic barbed devil, with a long (15') tail and a jagged row of barbed spines running up his back, culminating in a bony collar edged with spines at the back and sides of his head. His scaled skin is crimson in hue, his eyes yellow with black pupils.

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Spells in the hells

There is much more to be done before the Nine Hells are truly playable. As another step in that direction, the remainder of this presentation is devoted to some suggested spell alterations (that is, differences in the performance of spells on the Prime Material Plane compared to the plane in question), primarily for the plane of Avernus. (*Editor's note: Frank Mentzer, one of the resident rule experts on the AD&D™ game at TSR Hobbies, Inc., responded to our request for additional help by offering some additions and suggested corrections to the author's spell list. We have used [square brackets] to set off Frank's remarks from Ed Greenwood's original material.*)

The defensive strategy of the Nine Hells is to confine all entries to this plane, so that hostile or unauthorized visitors can be dealt with on Avernus and not in the realms of any of the arch-devils. If an attacker is strong, the arch-devils merely send more and more of their armies (who, given an arch-devil's authorization, can move freely about the hells) to Avernus, into the fray, until the foe is overwhelmed. If this strategy works, further details of the rest of the Nine Hells may never be necessary.

Magic alterations

The Nine Hells are environments very different from the Prime Material Plane. The arch-devils have, over a span of time far beyond man's ken, twisted facets of the nature of the hells to their own ends, resulting in magical conditions forbidding to intruders. As a rule of thumb, spell casters entering the Nine Hells will find that they cannot contact or summon creatures from other planes; cannot control fauna, flora, or weather; and in particular they will face many creatures (the devils) that are immune to the effects of most mind- and control-related spells.

Clerics and druids cannot regain spells above 2nd level, once cast, and the effects of many spells and even magical items are altered. A *protection from devils* scroll, for instance, would be ineffective if read in the hells. [A scroll of *protection from devils* would still have effect, but only that of a "normal" *protection from evil*, 10' radius spell effect. Partial reading gives the -2 penalty to attacks of, and the +2 bonus to the saving throws of the defenders from, the given type of devil (3, 7, or 10 segments to affect lesser, greater, or all devils, respectively). However, contact with any magic-resistant creature might cause the *protection* to vanish (normal MR check applies).]

Suggested spell alterations are given below, including those for spells published in earlier issues of DRAGON® Magazine, either from E. Gary Gygax's

column, *From the Sorcerer's Scroll*, or Len Lakofka's column, *Leomund's Tiny Hut*. Note that new spells published after issue #69 of DRAGON Magazine are unknown to me as of this writing, and hence are not covered. These alterations (and those of magical items and character abilities, detailed hereafter) are of necessity incomplete: few are eager to learn such alterations the hard way, by experimentation in the hells, and few who do learn return to tell the tale.

Spells are listed by class, and within each character class by ascending level, alphabetically by name within each level. "X" equals "ineffective."

Cleric spells

Command: Ineffective against greater devils.

Detect evil: Evil is so overwhelming that this spell can only be used negatively; i.e., to detect the absence of evil in a specific object or creature.

[*Light* and *continual light* spells have areas of effect of half normal size and intensity, and may attract wandering residents of the plane, if any (1 in 6 chance, check per turn).]

Protection from evil: X

Protection from good: Effects of double strength.

[*Purify food & drink*: X]

Sanctuary: Ineffective versus arch-devils; other creatures attacking caster gain a +2 bonus on saves vs. spell.

Chant: X

Holy symbol: Ineffective, and any attempt to cast will draw the nearest devil to the place of casting, quickly.

Messenger: X

Dust devil: X

Enthrall: X

Prayer: X

[*Speak with dead*: X]

Abjure/implore: Both forms ineffective
Ceremony, consecrate ground: X
Divination: X
Negative plane protection: X
Protection from evil, 10' radius: X

[Note that a paladin's radiant *protection* effect (and that of any other creature connected to the Positive Material Plane) is merely reduced from 10' radius to personal effect only.]

Protection from good, 10' radius: effects of double strength.

Atonement: X

Commune: X [*Commune, aerial servant, conjure animals*, and other spells involving direct contact with another plane might work, depending on the power of the being contacted and the actual plane of the Nine Hells on which the spell is cast. If on the outermost (or first, or highest, or closest to the Inner

Planes), all such spells will work properly. A demigod can be contacted on the second plane "down"; a lesser god, the third; and a greater god, five planes "down." No contact of any sort can be made from the 6th-9th planes of the Nine Hells unless permission is given from the ruler of the plane.]

Dispel evil: X

Flame strike: X

Insect plague: X

Quest: X

Raise dead: X

Aerial servant: X [See *commune*.]

Conjure animals: X [See *commune*.]

Find the path: X

[*Word of recall*: Will only work from the 1st-6th planes; the 7th-9th planes are too far removed.]

[*Astral spell*: Will only work from the 1st of the Nine Hells.]

Control weather: X

Earthquake: X

Exaction: Ineffective versus devils.

[*Gate*: Affects deities in limited fashion, as per *commune* (see above).]

Henley's digit of disruption: Ineffective, but caster will know this upon thinking of the spell, prior to casting.

Holy word: Ineffective. (*Unholy word* will be effective only if caster worships one of the arch-devils, and then only against lesser devils.)

Resurrection: X

Druid spells

Entangle: X

Predict weather: X

[*Purify water*: X]

Heat metal: Functions normally, but note that devils suffer no damage from the "hot" version and only half damage from the cold version.

[*Obscurement*: Half normal dimensions, 1/8 normal volume (1/2" cube/level).]

[*Call lightning*: X]

Plant growth: X

Summon insects: X

Animal summoning I: X

Call woodland beings: X

Hold plant: Plants native to the hells save vs. the spell at +2.

Animal growth (or *reduction*): X

Animal summoning II: X

Commune with nature: X

Insect plague: X

Animal summoning III: X

Conjure fire elemental: X [*Conjure elemental* (fire or earth) works from Avernus only.]

[*Feeblemind*: Treat all devils as if human clerics (+1 to save).]

Weather summoning: X

Chariot of Sustarre: This spell is effective on Avernus, but not when cast on any of the other hells.

Confusion: Ineffective versus greater devils; lesser devils save vs. spell at normal, not at -2.

Conjure earth elemental: X [But see *conjure fire elemental* above.]

Control weather: X

Creeping doom: X

[Finger of death: Ineffective against any devil.]

[Reincarnation: X]

Magic-user spells

Cantrips — *Bee*: X; *Bug*: X; *Change*: ineffective vs. creatures native to the hells; *Gnats*: X; *Mouse*: X; *Spider*: X; *Yawn*: ineffective vs. creatures native to the hells.

Find familiar: Will work only if cast by a lawful evil or neutral evil magic-user; only imps can be summoned in the hells.

[Light and continual light: See note under cleric spells.]

Melt: Ice devils are not affected by this spell, suffering no damage.

Mount: X

Precipitation: X

Protection from evil: X

Protection from good: Effects will be of double strength.

Taunt: X

Detect evil: See note under cleric spells. *Forget*: Ineffective against all devils.

[Invisibility (all sorts): The DM must remember to check each devil's chance of detecting invisibility (as applicable), based on intelligence and hit dice (DMG p. 60). Thus, any form of invisibility is often ineffective against arch-devils.]

Invitation: ineffective against devils

[Rope trick: The "extra-dimensional space" will be on an adjacent level of the hells, and may invite unexpected visitors (cf. gate).]

Scare: X

[Shutter: Will not affect a devil's talisman.]

Tasha's uncontrollable hideous laughter: Ineffective versus greater devils.

Cloudburst: X

Material: X

Monster summoning I: X

Protection from evil 10' radius: X

Protection from good 10' radius: Effects will be of double strength.

Sepia snake sigil: Will always miss devils of any sort.

Charm monster: Ineffective versus greater devils; lesser devils save at +2.

Fear: Ineffective versus undead, devils.

Fire charm: Ineffective versus greater devils.

Monster summoning II: X

Plant growth: X

[Wall of ice: Duration is but 1 round per level in most warm areas of the hells.]

Avoidance: Ineffective versus the apparel or possessions on the person of a devil.

Conjure elemental: X [See note under druid spell *conjure fire elemental*.]

Contact other plane: Effective only to other planes within the hells. [Ignore the "elemental" line in the spell description, calculating all distances as needed.]

Dismissal: Effective in the normal manner, but its reverse, *beckon*, will never succeed in summoning a creature from any plane but one of the other hells.

Distance distortion: X

Dolor: Ineffective versus devils and other creatures native to the hells. Nothing will happen when it is cast; the target devil will not *charm* and *dominate* the caster.

[Feeblemind: See note under the druid spell of the same name.]

Leomund's lamentable belabourment: Ineffective versus devils.

Leomund's secret chest: The chest can be summoned on Avernus, but not on any of the other hells, and in no case will a living creature of any sort enter the hells via such a chest.

Magic jar: Ineffective versus greater devils.

Monster summoning III: X

[Wall of iron or wall of stone: These effects have a duration of 1 turn per level of the caster.]

Control weather: X

[Death spell: Ineffective against any devil.]

Ensnarement: X

Geas: Ineffective versus devils.

Invisible stalker: X [See note under the cleric spell *commune*.]

Monster summoning IV: X

[Reincarnation: X]

Spiriturack: Only effective versus devils (demons cannot be contacted from the hells), and casting it will attract any greater and arch-devils on the plane of casting to the location of the caster, within 1 turn.

Transmute water to dust: The waters of marshy areas in the upper hells (e.g., Minauros) will be affected by this spell, but the river Lethe and the waters of the swamp and ocean of Stygia will not.

Banishment: Note that a devil cannot be forced "back" to "its own" other plane of the hells; this spell can banish other creatures from the hells, but cannot force creatures native to the hells from one level to another.

Cacodemon: X

Charm plants: X [Permits communication only, not charm.]

Limited wish: Devils are in no way affected by a *limited wish* cast in the hells. Creatures may leave, but not enter or be summoned to, the hells by means of

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a *limited wish*. Such a spell cannot be used to contact a deity or a deity's servants except an arch-devil or servants, nor to gain spells from that deity or servants.

Monster summoning V: X

Teleport without error: This can be used to enter or leave the hells, but the chance of error in any case rises by 21%.

Torment: Any unfortunate spell caster undertaking such a spell will soon learn that, in the hells, no devil can be bound in a magic circle, thaumaturgic triangle, pentagram, or other drawn boundary. (Protective circles will keep some devils at bay, however, and physical barriers or prisons, such as a *forcecage*, can contain most devils.)

Truename: It is worth noting with respect to this spell that no arch-devil's true name is known to other devils (except perhaps Asmodeus; if this were not so, the devil in question would not retain his or her position for long), and as a rule, only arch-devils know the names of other devils (typically only a few loyal to them, for they would act quickly to bring about the downfall of an enemy, by means not available to casters of this spell). Devils do not bargain *with* the true names of other devils, although they may bargain *for* such names. The *sending* portion of the spell will work as a means of delivering willing creatures from the hells to other, safer planes, or as a means of transport within the hells.

[*Vanish*: If the object is of greater bulk than the given limit, the object is not replaced by stone, but is instead entirely unaffected.]

[*Antipathy/sympathy*: Any devil on its home plane is unaffected.]

Binding: See *torment*, above.

Demand: Ineffective versus devils.

Mass charm: Ineffective versus greater devils.

[*Maze*: The "extra-dimensional space" is 3 planes removed at best, and may (depending on the level of the hells on which it is cast) have an effect similar to *rope trick* or *gate*.]

Monster summoning VI: X

Sink: Greater devils are unaffected by this spell. Other creatures of the hells are allowed the usual saving throw.

Symbol: Ineffective versus greater devils.

[*Trap the soul*: Ineffective against arch-devils.]

Energy drain: Ineffective in the hells. When the spell is called to mind (the concentration just prior to casting begun), the caster will realize that the spell will not work — and if spellcasting is not undertaken, the spell will not be lost.

Imprisonment: [Ineffective against arch-devils, but will place any other devil into *temporal stasis* until dispelled (and note that a standard magic-resistance

check applies).] The reverse of the spell will *not* cause any creatures to appear.

Monster summoning VII: X

Wish: See *limited wish*, above; conditions are identical except that a *wish* may affect lesser devils.

Illusionist spells

[*Hypnotism*: Ineffective against all devils.]

[*Light* and *continual light*: See note under cleric spells.]

Spook: Ineffective on creatures native to the hells.

[*Wall of fog*: Half normal dimensions, 1/8 normal value.]

Fascinate: X

Hypnotic pattern: Ineffective versus all devils.

[*Invisibility* (all forms): See note under magic-user spells.]

[*Illusionary script*: Ineffective against greater devils.]

[*Paralyzation*: Note that a paralyzed devil can still perform "at will" abilities, including *teleport*.]

Confusion: Ineffective vs. greater devils; lesser devils save vs. spell at par, not at -2.

[*Emotion*: Ineffective against greater devils.]

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[*Minor creation*: Half normal duration, or 1/10 normal duration when on the 7th-9th planes of the hells.]

Phantasmal killer: Ineffective versus greater devils.

[*Shadow monsters*: All have half the given hit points, and inflict half the given damage against victims who make their saving throws, due to the remote position of the hells with respect to the Plane of Shadow.]

Solid fog: Does not reduce the movement of creatures native to the hells.

Chaos: X

[*Demi-shadow monsters*: See *shadow monsters* above.]

[*Major creation*: Half normal duration, or 1/10 normal duration when on the 7th-9th planes of the hells.]

Maze: [See note under magic-user spell of the same name.]

[*Shadow door*: The invisibility is ineffective against arch-devils.]

[*Shadow magic*: Victims failing their saving throws take only half normal damage.]

[*Summon shadow*: X]

Conjure animals: X

[*Demi-shadow magic*: See *shadow magic* above.]

[*Mass suggestion*: Ineffective against arch-devils.]

[*Permanent illusion*: Lasts only 3 minutes after concentration ends.]

[*Shades*: See *shadow monsters* above.]

Alter reality: Devils are in no way affected by an *alter reality* cast in the hells; the conditions limiting the spell are identical to those on the magic-user spell *limited wish* (see above).

[*Astral spell*: See note under cleric spell of the same name.]

Shadow walk: X

Vision: X [Works normally on the first of the Nine Hells.]

Weird: Ineffective versus greater devils; lesser devils save at +3; ineffective versus undead.

(Note that in this list, the term "greater devil" includes arch-devils unless the two terms are used separately in the same entry.)

[General note on limited and full *wishes*: The ruler of any plane of existence (including the Nine Hells) has full and final "veto power" over any *wish* cast within its/his/her territorial jurisdiction. This power might or might not be exercised with any given *wish*, depending on the nature of the ruler and the *wish*. However, the exceedingly lawful nature of the hells is such that the ruler will immediately know of any and all such attempts, and will immediately (in all but exceptional circumstances) cancel, modify, or grant the effects, quite possibly arriving in person (with all appropriate guards and assistants) to adjudicate the matter.]

Magic item alterations

Potion of fire resistance: Effective against the natural fires of the hells and those magically produced by creatures such as nightmares, up to and including malebranche — but, the potion seems ineffective against the fiery magics of pit fiends and all greater unique devils. (A *ring of fire resistance* seems strong enough to protect against such powerful magical fires.)

Potion of gaseous form: An adventurer using such a potion exploded when struck by a firewind, while fleeing across the rifts of Nessus. Companions of the lost one say the firewind appeared drawn to the gas.

Oil of ethereality: [No effect.] Ethereal individuals are apparently not invisible in the hells.

Potion of treasure finding: Apparently ineffective in palaces and caves of the Nine Hells.

Ring of djinni summoning: The djinni will not feel its summons, nor appear, if such a ring is rubbed when in the hells; its operation is suspended.

Ring of elemental command: Such a ring is inoperative in the hells, and none of its effects or properties (including saving throw penalties) will be effective.

Ring of fire resistance: See *potion of fire resistance*, above.

Ring of human influence: All devils, even if in human or humanoid form, are totally unaffected by such a ring.

Ring of multiple wishes: Any *wishes* that affect any greater or arch-devil (other than to free the speaker or a stated creature from the physical grasp or confinement of such a being) are beyond the power of the magic of the item. Requests involving exit from the hells will be granted, as will *wishes* involving travel from place to place within the hells, but such travel will not extend to captive devils or other creatures of lawful evil alignment, and may not operate to the precise destination requested.

Ring of three wishes: See *ring of multiple wishes*. For *limited wish* items, see that spell under the above list of spell alterations.

Ring of water walking: This item will operate in the marshes of Minauros and probably elsewhere in the hells as well, but demonstrably does not function with respect to Lethe, the River of Forgetfulness, on Nessus.

Rod of beguiling: [Ineffective against all residents on their home planes.]

[*Rod of lordly might*: In the first hell (Avernus), the battle axe effect is +2, the spear +1, and other weapon effects are non-magical. Deductions apply for planes further removed. All mechanical effects work normally.]

Rod of resurrection: This item will not function properly in the hells. If its employment is attempted, charges will be drained in the usual manner, but the rod

will only *animate dead* — "raising" a mindless, undead zombie which will obey anyone bearing the rod. The zombie is subject to the usual damage and continuing decay while animated, and if removed from the hells to another plane, will revert to an inanimate, lifeless corpse.

Rod of rulership: Such *rulership* is ineffective against hellcats and all devils.

[*Rod of smiting*: Acts as a +1 weapon in the first hell, and non-magical on planes further removed; however, one charge is still used on a roll of 20, and triple normal damage is still inflicted thereby (if the victim can be damaged by normal weapons).]

Staff of command: Ineffective in the hells.

Staff of the magi: *Protection from evil* power ineffective, *protection from good* of double strength. *Plane travel* power is unaffected, but *conjure elemental* function will be ineffective. The *retributive strike* power is unaffected, and has operated most efficiently in the hells! [For *staff of the magi* and *staff of power*, see notes on spell alterations for *light*, *invisibility*, etc.]

Staff of the serpent: Hell hounds, hellcats, and all devils are immune to the poison of the *adder* version.

[*Staff of striking*: Acts as a +1 weapon in the first hell, and non-magical on planes further removed; however, charges still double or triple normal damage (if the victim can be damaged by normal weapons).]

Staff of withering: Ineffective in the hells (refer to DMG).

Wand of conjuration: The *monster summoning* function will be ineffective, but charges will be drained — and lost — in the usual manner when this power is called upon.

Wand of enemy detection: Ineffective in the hells.

Wand of fear: Ineffective in the hells.

Wand of magic detection: Ineffective in the hells.

Wand of metal and mineral detection: Ineffective in the hells.

[*Wand of wonder*: No effect if *heavy ruin*, *summon*, or *create* any creature, plant, or object (rhino, butterfly, grass, *et al.*) is indicated; only certain spell effects will be produced.]

Arrow of direction: Ineffective; it will fall in random directions when used in the hells, although this may not be immediately evident to the user.

Bag of beans: The soil and water of the hells cannot cause such beans to sprout. They retain, however, their explosive property.

Bag of devouring: A *bag of devouring* will never be found in the hells, and will not enter them; it will disappear (along with any contents) instantaneously if its bearer enters any of the hells.

Book of exulted deeds: Cannot be touched by lesser devils, against whom it functions as though it were a *protection*

from evil of 20' radius, and if any such approach to 10' distant, they take 2-12 electrical damage (no save), and are *re-pulsed*. This applies also to non-diabolic creatures of the hells. Greater devils take 1-6 damage per contact, and are (save at +1) *confused* (75%), *slowed* (20%), or both (5%) for 1-4 rounds at every contact with such a book. Arch-devils take 2-4 points of damage upon touching such a book, and their touch destroys it.

Bowl commanding water elementals: Ineffective in the hells.

Bowl of watery death: Will function normally in the hells. A tiny, drowned magic-user will turn into a lemure of normal size if still in the hells after 60 turns have elapsed.

Brazier commanding fire elementals: Ineffective in the hells.

Brazier of sleep smoke: When a fire is lit in such a brazier when in the hells, clouds of billowing smoke will pour forth, but it has no sleep effects, and no fire elemental will appear. The smoke will dissipate, and the fire go out, in 2-6 rounds.

Censer controlling air elementals: Ineffective in the hells.

Censer of summoning hostile air elementals: Ineffective in the hells.

Crystal ball: If used while in the hells, the chance of locating a subject within the Nine Hells is normal; i.e. as given in the DMG (note that from one level of the hells to another is to another plane, and subject to -25% penalty). Arch-devils will always (100%) feel the view-presence of a scrying entity, knowing its direction and approximate distance after 1-4 rounds of observation, if on the same plane, and knowing the plane after 3-12 continuous rounds of observation if the observer is on another plane. If a *crystal ball* is employed in the hells to observe things on other planes outside of the hells, there is a penalty of -33% on locating a subject (but only -24% if the subject is on the Prime Material Plane).

Crystal hypnosis ball: If a magic-user should employ a ball controlled by an arch-devil (and most arch-devils place four to twelve or so on the Prime Material Plane to further their own ends and to observe events) while in the hells, the *suggestion* employed immediately will be to travel to (or move toward) the location of (or the plane of) the controlling arch-devil. Rarely (and only if the controlled individual's party is strong), the devil may compel the individual to undertake a mission in the hells, typically stealing from or spying on a rival arch-devil. If a *crystal hypnosis ball* controlled by a being not in the hells is employed by a magic user in the hells, nothing will occur; the crystal ball will seem only a non-magical sphere of glassy crystal, although it will still radiate a detectable dwomeer.

Deck of many things: Plaques drawn in the hells will have normal effects except

for the following: *knight* will arrive by means of *plane shift* in 1-3 rounds, bewildered but fully armed and armored, fresh and at full hit points — and will immediately recognize the character he wishes to follow. *Flames* will cause the devil (DM's choice as to identity, but it will be a devil somewhere in the hells at the time the card is drawn) to immediately see the character who has drawn the card, and know the precise location of the character at that time. If *balance* is drawn and the character's new alignment is lawful evil, betrayal of the party in such a way as to gain the most status for the newly lawful evil character will be the ultimate result.

Eyes of charming: *Charm* powers are not effective versus devils or other monsters; the eyes enable the wearer to *charm person* only.

Helm of teleportation: This item will function properly in the hells, but there is a 33% chance that the destination reached will be slightly different than that intended — i.e., a *teleport* into an infernal palace might deposit one outside the gates. Inter-planar travel (i.e. into another level of the hells) is of course not possible. This "shift" phenomenon does not appear to affect the spell *teleport* (but evidence available to date is fragmentary), and in any case the "shift" effect is entirely separate from the vertical-error risk of teleportation.

Horn of the Tritons: Ineffective if winded in the hells.

Horn of Valhalla: Will be effective if winded in the hells, and any berserkers appearing will fight any devils within view before turning on the horn-blower, if there is any class or alignment conflict. The berserkers will vanish in 6 turns (although few will survive that long if called into direct combat with devils).

Instrument of the bards: See *bards* under *character ability alterations*, below.

Iron flask: Any devil or rakshasa released from such a flask will immediately know where it is and will seek to *summon* or attract the attention of infernal aid to defeat the individual releasing it and any companions.

Pipes of the sewers: Rats are present in the hells in only two places: the dungeons beneath the iron city of Dis, and in the garbage-choked towers of Malagard. Only when the *pipes* are played in these places will rats appear.

Robe of eyes: The tracking ability of such a *robe* is ineffective in the hells, but otherwise it functions normally.

Scarab of enraging enemies: Greater devils and arch-devils are immune to the effects of this item.

Sphere of annihilation: Such phenomena are never found in the hells, and cannot be magically *plane shifted* or otherwise made to enter the infernal regions.

Stone of controlling earth elementals: Ineffective in the hells.

Talisman of pure good: In the hells,

this item will not function normally: evil clerics (or evil creatures of any sort) will not be swallowed up in a flaming chasm. Such a *talisman* has a marked effect on all vile creatures in the hells (including devils); the touch of one ("to hit" roll required) will do any such creature 12-48 points of damage (no saving throw), and drain 1 charge. If its charges are exhausted in the hells, such a talisman will darken, shrivel, and crumble.

Talisman of ultimate evil: Will function normally in the hells, but will not lose any charges, regardless of the number of uses to which it is put. Devils will not have or know how to use such talismans.

Trident of fish command: Any aquatic life to be found in the hells (i.e., in the swamp or ocean of Stygia or the river Lethe) is unaffected by such a trident.

[General note on magic items: For items constructed on the Prime Material Plane, all magic weapon "plusses" are dropped by 2 on the first of the Nine Hells (Avernus), and by 1 more for each plane further removed.]

Note regarding artifacts and relics: All such items function normally in the hells. It is most unlikely that artifacts or relics of any sort will be found in the hells. If there are any such, items dedicated to "good" will not be found among them, and they will lie within the walls of the arch-devils' fortresses — not lost or "forgotten" for a character to happen upon.

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Character ability alterations

Combat

Note that a +2 (at least) or better magic weapon is required to physically hit any unique devil or arch-devil, including the nobility of hell and the outcast devils. DMs should also remember that fire of any sort has no effect on devils or any other creature native to the hells.

Archery: Use of this skill (by any character proficient in it) is impossible on the plane of Dis, save within Dispater's palace itself, or underground (due to the winds), and also impossible in the central rifts of Nessus (due to the firewinds). It can otherwise be exercised normally, although volcanic activity on Phlegethos, and fireball formation on Avernus, may destroy the occasional missile.

Infravision: For elves, half-elves, spell casters employing such a spell, and other creatures while in Phlegethos, Malbolge, and Maladomini, there is too much background heat in all surroundings for *infravision* to detect anything more than cold or cool spell effects, objects, etc., (and these soon warm from contact with the surroundings).

Psionics

Psionic processes function with only minor modifications in the hells. Psionic combat is unaffected.

Animal telepathy: All creatures native to the hells are considered "monsters" as far as this ability is concerned.

Body equilibrium: Anyone walking upon the water of the river Lethe (or for that matter, the rivers of fire in Phlegethos, or the lake of Cocytus) will be subject to the natural effects described in the text of this article. Note that use of this discipline will not prevent Cocytus from swallowing a psionic character — that action is a physical, attacking action and not a matter of the ice giving way and closing over someone who has fallen.

Detection of good/evil: The overwhelming evil of the hells so pervades everything a psionic character concentrates on that good creatures are easier to distinguish (+33% chance), good objects slightly so (+10%), and evil creatures or objects do not betray their potency or power by their auras, nor their precise (lawful, chaotic, neutral) evil alignment.

Domination: This ability functions normally in the hells, but arch-devils and greater devils are immune.

ESP: The thoughts of devils will be meaningless unless the psionic recipient is conversant with Mabrahoring, the language of the hells. The minds of arch-devils and greater devils are not "unshielded"; they cannot be "read" by this means.

Hypnosis: Devils of all sorts are immune to this mental power.

Invisibility: Arch-devils have minds of too great power to be affected by psionic *invisibility*, but they will not always

immediately realize that the psionic character is invisible to others.

Molecular agitation: Devils are immune to both heat and fire damage effects.

Sensitivity to psychic impressions: Any psionic character foolish enough to exercise this discipline in the hells will quickly (within 1 round) be overwhelmed by the cumulative violent emotions and horrific visions of the many lemures, tormented souls, and evil deeds done here. The effects are as follows: The psionic must save vs. death magic or be driven insane (melancholia, megalomania, mania, manic-depressive, hallucinatory insanity, homicidal mania, hebephrenia, suicidal mania, or catatonia; see DMG). A psionic character who successfully saves will fall unconscious for 1-2 rounds, and thereafter be *confused* for 1-4 rounds. (Psionic individuals who are evil by nature save at +2.)

Mass domination: Ineffective versus arch-devils and greater devils.

Molecular rearrangement: Any metals contained in diabolical magic items, such as the fork of Mephistopheles, will not be affected by this psionic power; nor will its use affect the powers of such items.

Telepathic projection: Ineffective versus all devils.

Teleportation: There is a 33% chance that an intended destination will not be reached (see *helm of teleportation* under *Magic item alterations*, above). Note that this is different from mis-teleporting (i.e. low or high), which can also occur (normal probabilities and means of psychic prevention prevail).

Clerics

No cleric, regardless of alignment or deity, can turn away or command into service any devil while in the hells. Undead, etc., will be affected normally.

Druids

The flora, fauna, and weather of the hells, as mentioned under the list of spell alterations above, are largely immune from magical influence and control. Druid abilities gained at third and seventh levels (refer to the *Players Handbook*) are unaffected.

Paladins

The *detect evil* ability of this class will prove sensitive enough to distinguish powerfully evil beings and items from the surroundings, although all things native to the hells will display their evil nature to the paladin. Paladins may not affect devils while in the hells (see cleric section, above) although this power versus undead and the like is unaffected. A *war-horse* cannot be called while in the hells, if it is not taken to the hells with the paladin; note that such steeds will be trembling with fear at all times it is in the infernal regions, and if menaced by devils and/or not constantly reassured and

commanded to stay close by its master, will bolt in fear (and likely be lost) when faced by the diabolic. A paladin's *protection from evil* does not operate in the hells, except as a white, *continual light*-like radiance enveloping the paladin, retaining only the +2 saving throw bonus.

Rangers

The *tracking* ability of rangers is entirely lost while in the hells.

Thieves

Hiding in shadows is normally impossible with respect to devils and other creatures of the hells; for game purposes assume a base penalty of -33% to the chance, further modified by the DM for circumstances. *Climb walls* is often modified in the hells for conditions: smooth iron walls, such as those of the city of Dis and Mephistar, subtract 20% from the ability to successfully climb them; if heavily rusted, the DM may add another -15% penalty to simulate the chance of the entire wall collapsing or breaking away under the weight of the climber. The treacherous alpine and glacial ice of Stygia and Caina subtract 33% from the thief's chance to climb them successfully. A *spider climb* spell employed by a thief or other character will overcome such penalties, and have its normal effect.

Assassins

Refer to thief functions, above; assassins are subject to the same modifications. A *disguise* in which the assassin appears to be a devil will not fool any devil.

Monks

Refer to thief functions, above; monks are subject to the same modifications. A *quivering palm* attack cannot affect any devil (and remember, creatures only hit by magical weapons are unaffected).

Bards

Arch-devils and greater devils are immune to the charming (*suggestion*) powers of a bard, even when augmented by a magical *instrument of the bards*. All other properties of bards and bardic instruments will function normally, with the following exceptions for abilities that are ineffective for certain instruments: Fochlucan Bandore, *en tangle*; Doss Lute, *hold animal*; Cli Lyre, *control winds*; Anstruth Harp, *weather summoning*; Ollamh Harp, *control weather*.

Barbarians

The following barbarian skills are affected while in the hells: *tracking* (as with rangers); *animal training* (ineffective versus all animals native to the hells); *outdoor crafts*; and *survival*. The DM should rule carefully on what facets, if any, of *outdoor crafts* and *survival* become effective after a month's existence — which is no small feat — in the initially alien environment of the hells ♫

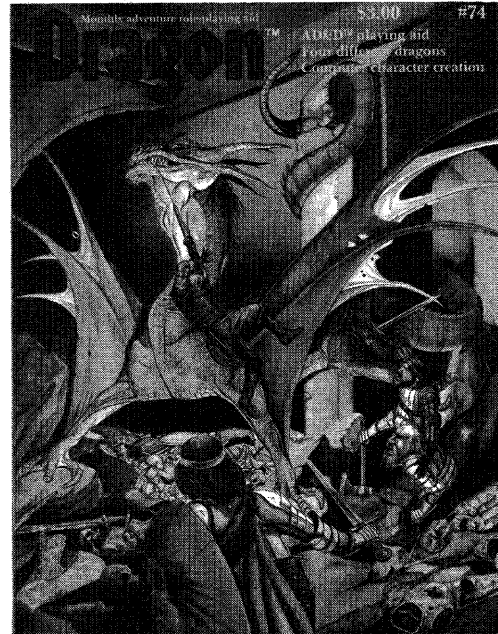
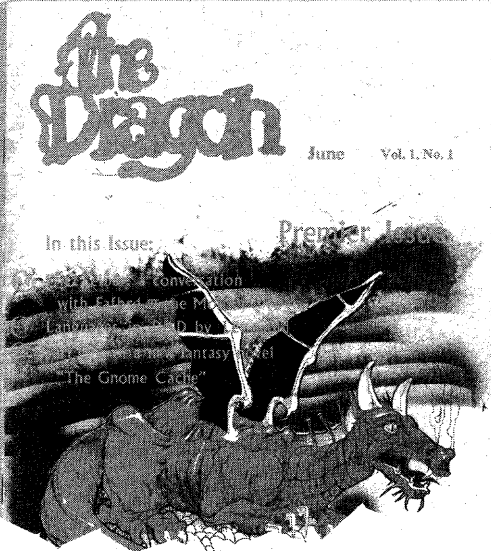
The Strategic Review

MILITARY MINIATURES * GAMES * SWORDS & SORCERY
 SPRING 1975 Single Copy 50¢ Vol. 1, No. 1

WHAT'S GOING ON
 THE STRATEGIC REVIEW is the new
 which will serve you better than any
 12th's product line. However, it will do
 more and cover a much broader and
 first issue line. This being our first issue
 our general line. It is our intention to
 with other things we will certainly give
 try to cover as much as possible. Carry-
 over is the former planned for each issue.
 Regular columns will include STRAT-
 FEATURES with a new Dungeons & Dragons
 CRUSADE, THE ANARCHY, THE FIVE,
 WORLD of news and brief reviews. Much
 how many of each of the regular columns
 but we will always try to get the subject
 There will be one or two feature articles
 include one or two depends mainly upon
 back from page one of this issue. In case
 of a single sheet or double-sheet matter.
 In brief, you'll find that the matter (the
 of index for SWORDSMANSHIP ADVENTURE
 enjoy.

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 of THE STRATEGIC REVIEW, but we will
 things we thought we'd better go ahead.
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 subscription at the rate of \$3.00 per an-
 back issues are available. "No cash,
 members is not guaranteed."
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 "to be made."
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NAME: *The DRAGON®* magazine index

FREQUENCY: *One of a kind*

NO. APPEARING: *#1—#74, plus The Strategic Review*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: *Find lost article, avoid confusion*

Two things about dragons are generally true: They live for a long time, and they accumulate lots of treasure. Fortunately, the same two things are true of DRAGON® magazine, and the information that appears on the following six pages is proof of that fact.

Those pages contain an index of all the significant material that was printed in the first seven years of DRAGON magazine, plus the only seven issues of The Strategic Review, the publication that was the predecessor of this magazine. We hope the index will be valuable to each of our readers for at least one of its many purposes; this preface is offered in the interest of

explaining why we did what we did, so that the index will be understandable and easy to use.

This listing of articles and features is as comprehensive as we could make it without going into burdensome detail. It has a different format from the first index that appeared 'way back in issue #40 — but it does include all of the important information from the original index as well, so you don't need to have that one, too.

In the original index, we used the full titles of articles and also listed authors' names. This time, we've deleted the author credits and altered most of the identifying lines for articles, so that they more accurately describe what an article

(Continued on next page)

was *about* instead of what it happened to be *called*. The first change was made for the sake of brevity, to keep the index from getting too large to be easily used. The second change was made to make the list more useful for readers interested in finding out everything we've printed on a specific subject. The only exceptions to these rules are for fiction pieces, where authors are credited, and articles that originally appeared under titles that left no doubt about the topics they covered.

Individual articles are listed under major headings organized alphabetically, just as in any index. Most of the major headings are general; for instance, you won't find a separate heading for "Championship Sumo Wrestling," but you will find a heading called "Game Inclusions," under which that game is listed along with all the others we've printed over the years.

In most cases, entries under a major heading are listed in chronological order. Certain groups of entries, such as those under "Character Classes (Unofficial)," are organized alphabetically to make it easier to pick out particular items in the list. Unless otherwise specified, most headings refer to material pertaining to or derived from the D&D® or AD&D™ game systems, since the vast majority of the articles printed in the magazine have concerned those games. Other games that have proven popular enough to warrant many articles about them (such as the GAMMA WORLD®, TOP SECRET®, and TRAVELLER® games), have their own headings. Articles on other games can be located under broader headings such as "Science Fiction Games." To use the index most efficiently, you should skim through all the pages a few times to familiarize yourself with the major headings; this will save a few seconds of frantic page-flipping when you really need to use it to find something.

Articles and features are keyed with a pair of numbers separated by a slash, denoting (first) the issue number and (second) the page number. Entries that were printed in The Strategic Review have the letters "SR" preceding the pair of numbers.

We've done a certain amount of cross-referencing (the "see also" lines at the end of some categories) to help you find your way to other headings that contain related material. It will quickly become obvious that we didn't carry this to an extreme; if we had done so, a few of the headings would be cross-referenced to practically every other category in the index. Also, some articles have been listed under more than one major heading, simply because we felt they deserved to be. The cross-referencing and

duplication of entries was done to help you use the index more easily on a search for specific material — but keep in mind at all times that the system isn't necessarily complete.

How do we expect the index to be used? The simplest and most obvious use is for determining the issue (or issues) in which a certain article (or articles) appeared; if you can't remember if "Weather in the World of Greyhawk" was in #68 or #58, now you can find out without digging out both magazines.

We hope the index will be useful even to people who don't have very many issues of DRAGON magazine in their collections; by skimming through the entries, you might be able to figure out which back issues you could purchase that would be most helpful to you. Or, as a prospective contributor, you can find out what we've already published on a topic that's related to your manuscript, and how long ago the other articles on the same topic appeared. In general, we aren't interested in printing new articles on old subjects, especially if the published piece appeared fairly recently. But, as veteran readers of the magazine know (and as you can find out by reading through the index), we aren't opposed to "new, improved" treatments of subjects we've already covered.

Please note that virtually all of the issues of DRAGON magazine mentioned in the index are out of print and no longer available from Dragon Publishing or the Dungeon Hobby Shop. (A list of back issues that aren't sold out is printed in every issue of the magazine.) If you *must* have an article from an issue we don't sell, try shopping around a bit. Possibly, the article has been reprinted in one of our BEST of DRAGON® anthologies, which are still available. If that doesn't work, some game and hobby stores may have issues still on their shelves that we don't have to sell any more, or you may run across someone who has the issue and is willing to sell it to you. As a last resort, drop us a line to tell us how much you'd like to see a particular article reprinted. If we get enough requests for a certain article, chances are good that we'll include it in a future anthology. Unfortunately, business and economic reasons make it practically impossible for us to consider reprinting early issues in their entirety.

The index was compiled and prepared for publication by Mary Kirchoff, Patrick Price, Georgia Moore, Roger Moore, and Kim Mohan. We, and the rest of the people on the Dragon Publishing staff, hope you'll let us know if we made a mistake. And we wouldn't mind hearing any comments or criticisms that will help make the next index even better.

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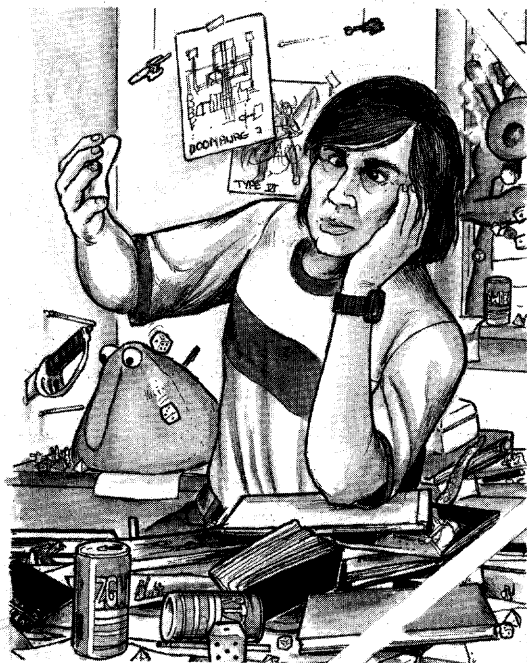
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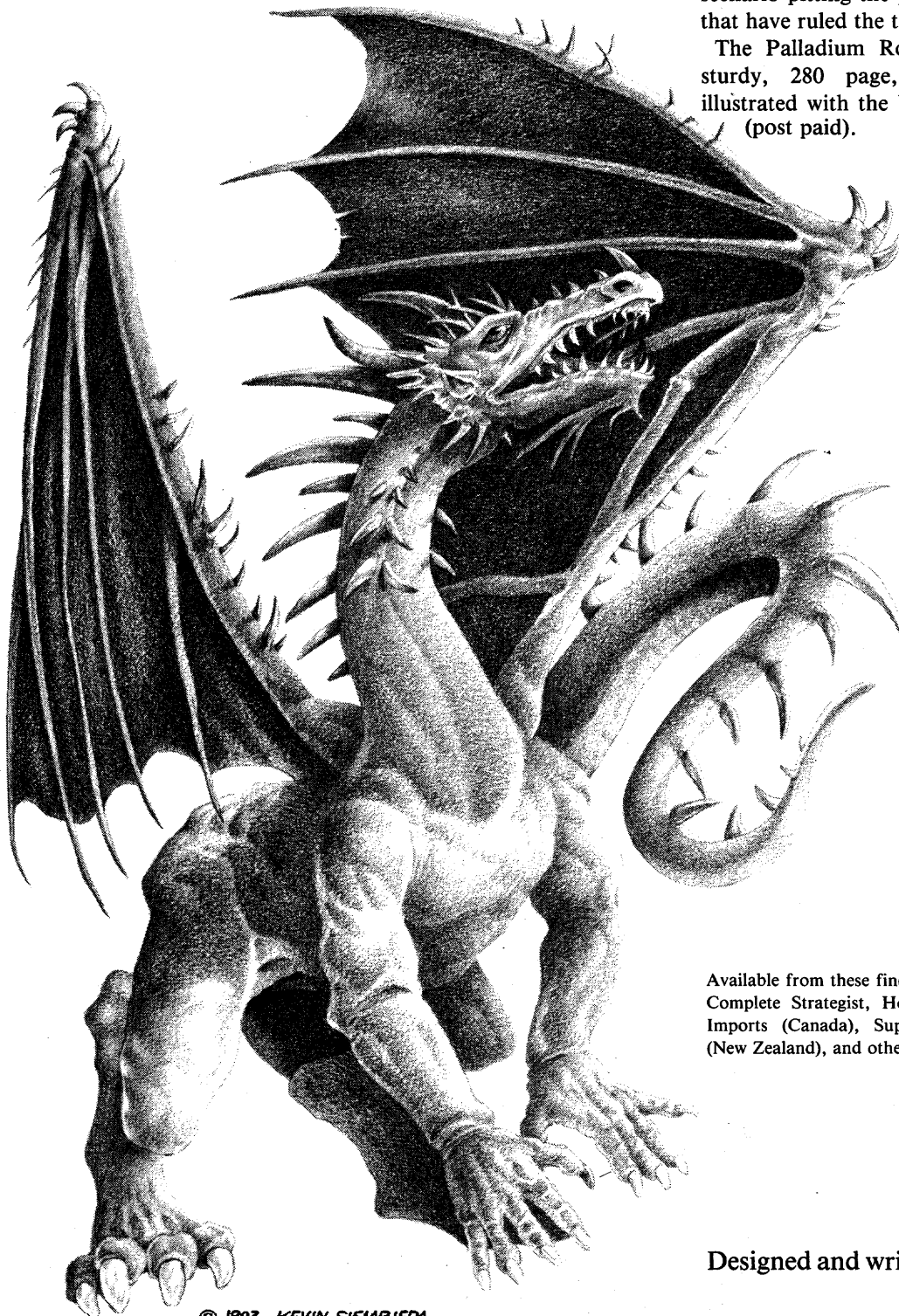
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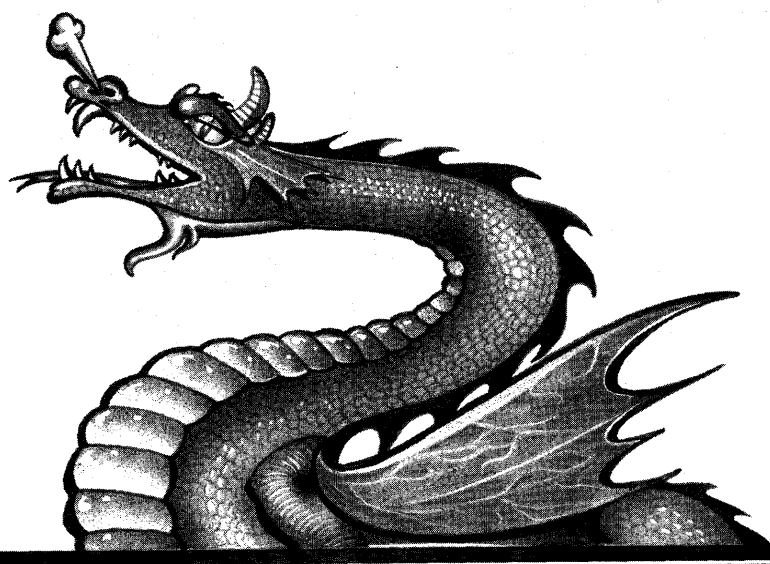
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RAL PARTHA

Saved by the cavalry!

An army of knowledge for BOOT HILL® players

by Carl Smith

The sergeant shaded his eyes, hunched over in the saddle, and squinted against the glare of the desert sun. The air he sucked into his lungs was hot. His shirt was stained with salt streaks under the armpits and from his shoulders down to his waist. The barrel of the carbine resting across his lap was almost too hot to touch.

Suddenly a searing pain shot through his left leg. An arrow! And now he saw the Indian, kneeling by a patch of sagebrush where he would have bet a week's pay that there wasn't enough room for a rabbit to hide. His Sharps carbine came around, and he made its big .52 caliber barrel boom while he wheeled his horse around to head for the troop. Behind him, the air filled with war cries. . . .

That scene is not one that often occurs in a BOOT HILL® campaign — but it could. With a little patience, some basic know-how, and a dab of creativity, you can turn your BOOT HILL campaign into part of the epic battle for the Old West. To do this, first you need some background information about American Indians and the United States Army.

In the 1870's, the United States was recovering from the Civil War. A large army was considered unnecessary; as soon after the war as 1875, the Army had shrunk to less than 24,000 men. For comparison, the Confederacy alone fielded more than 20,000 men at the Battle of Shiloh. In the Battle of Antietam, around 23,000 men were killed. Yet, the entire United States was now to be protected by this small force.

The U. S. Army circa 1875 consisted of five artillery regiments, twelve cavalry regiments, and nineteen infantry regiments. Artillery and cavalry regiments were composed of twelve companies each. Of the nineteen infantry regiments, ten were "old style" regiments of ten companies each, and nine were "new" regiments of twenty-four companies (divided into eight battalions of three companies apiece). This totalled 2,444 men per new regiment, about 305 men to a battalion, or 101 men to a company. Old regiments had 582 men per regiment.

Regiments were commanded by colonels, and each regimental commander had a lieutenant colonel as his second in command. Most battalions were commanded by majors, and consisted of a headquarters company and two other companies. Although colonels commanded on paper, the members of many

regiments never saw their commanding officers in the field.

Cavalry companies were called squadrons, and majors commanded them. Cavalry squadrons were composed of a headquarters troop and two other troops. Infantry companies and cavalry troops were usually commanded by captains, or sometimes a senior first lieutenant. Most troops/companies were composed of platoons (about 50 men in size) commanded by a first lieutenant. Many of the first lieutenants who commanded companies received the command so the captain could be free to perform his time-consuming administrative duties.

The platoon was subdivided into two 25-man sections, and each section was split into two squads, sometimes three. The squad was the smallest military unit.

In the army of 1875, the command structure was headed, of course, by the President as Commander-in-Chief, followed by the General of the Army, a Lieutenant General, three Major Generals, 14 Brigadier Generals, and 67 men holding the rank of colonel. The approximate distribution of men in the primary ranks for each branch of the service was as follows:

	Inf.	Cav.	Art.
Colonel	25	10	5
Lieutenant Colonel	25	20	5
Major	25	30	15
Captain	250	120	60
First Lieutenant	250	120	120
Second Lieutenant	250	120	65
Sergeant Major	19	12	5
First Sergeant	250	120	60
Sergeant	1,000	600	250
Corporal	1,000	480	240
Private	8,460	8,540	2,600

The army of the 1870's was a great melting pot. After the Civil War, many ex-Confederates enlisted out of desperation. There was nothing for them to return home to, and joblessness was rampant in the pre-industrial South. Irish, Scots, ex-Confederates, blacks, and a small cadre of professional soldiers formed the army that was supposed to keep peace and protect the frontiers.

Of particular interest are the 9th and 10th Cavalry Regiments and the 24th and 25th Infantry Regiments, which were formed entirely of black soldiers and black non-commissioned officers. (Their officers were white.) These soldiers fought so well that the Indians gave them a special name, "buffalo soldiers." The

name derived from their hair, which reminded the Indians of the pelt of the buffalo, and the naming was also a tribute to the soldiers' tenacity and courage. By an Indian, no higher compliment could be paid. At one time or another in their units' histories, all of the "buffalo soldiers" saw duty at Fort Davis, Texas.

Each of the branches of the army had its own distinctive color. This color appeared on its guidons, on its epaulette backgrounds, as the color for its NCO's stripes, and as the color of the stripe that ran down the trouser leg of the dress uniform. The infantry used oyster white or light blue, the cavalry yellow, artillery scarlet, and the medical corps green.

Unlike today's chevrons, the army's chevrons in 1875 had their point towards the wrist. In addition, if an NCO had a specialty (bugler, cook, stable sergeant, etc.), the symbol for that specialty (a bugle, a cook's hat, a horse's head) was embossed above the stripe in the regimental color. As such, there were no shoulder patches to designate units.

Although the dress uniform was fancy, we need concern ourselves only with the campaign uniform. The soldier wore a dark blue shirt, trousers of a lighter blue, and a blue or tan slouch hat. The infantry was issued shoes and leggings (which were often discarded), and the cavalry was issued boots.

For armament, the soldier carried a .45 caliber Colt New Model Army single-action revolver in a leather-flap holster. The holster was suspended from a leather belt on which was slung a cartridge box with 30 spare pistol rounds. Soldiers were also issued a 100-round bandolier or cartridge belt. Often, wearing their bandolier as a belt, they hung their holsters directly from it. This cartridge belt was filled with ammunition for their .52 caliber Sharps rifles. The infantry carried the rifle, and the cavalry carried the lighter carbine version until the army adopted the Krag-Jorgensen in the late 1890's. The calibre of the Sharps is often given as .52, .54, or .56, because different bullets measured differently from tip to base. Early in the Indian campaigns, the cavalry was issued the famous 7-shot Spencer repeating carbine. These were the firearms used at the famous Battle of Beecher's Island. Another standard piece of weaponry was the sabre issued to cavalry soldiers. Most of these were the 1860 model, and were almost always left to decorate the barracks wall while their owners campaigned.

(Continued on page 58)



FORT DAVIS (1880)

- | | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| A: Hospital steward's house | M: Guardhouse |
| B: Hospital | N: Inf. barracks |
| C: Magazine storehouse | O: Bakery |
| D: Band quarters | P: Commissary |
| E: Officers' Row (CO in center) | Q: Barracks |
| F: Quarters | R: Quartermaster storehouse |
| G: Sutler | S: Quartermaster stables |
| H: Telegraph office | T: Cav. stables |
| I: Parade field | U: Old commissary & storehouse |
| J: Chapel | V: Old quartermaster office & storehouse |
| K: Post HQ | W: Gardens |
| L: Cav. barracks (4 buildings) | |

Both cavalry and infantry were issued a canteen and a pair of blankets. The infantry was issued a backpack which was often discarded in favor of the blanket roll. The canteen was worn over the right shoulder on the left hip. If a pistol was worn, it was carried butt forward in a holster on the right hip. The cavalry wore their carbine slings so the carbine hung on the right side of the rider.

Two common pieces of "unofficial" gear, the large hunting knife and the canvas pouch (kit bag), were integral pieces of campaigning equipment. When troops used the Spencer carbine, they carried a box of spare, loaded ammunition tubes to insert into the butt of the rifle.

The army was often criticized for using a single-shot rifle when so many repeating rifles were available. The reason they did not change was twofold: One, the range of the Sharps was such that it easily outdistanced many of the Indians' weapons and kept them at bay; two, the Sharps did not often jam, as did the repeating rifles.

The army was trained to fight. The infantry dug rifle pits for protection, and the cavalry fought dismounted. Cavalrymen were trained to make their mounts lie down during a gunfight, so the horse's body could serve as a shield if no other cover was available. When large groups of cavalry fought on foot, one of every five men was designated as a horse-

handler. He was left to watch the mounts of all five while the others were freed for offensive actions.

The mission of the U. S. Army in the Southwest was one of varied purposes and means, but primarily — from the army's viewpoint, anyway — the soldiers were a peacekeeping force. They escorted civilians, scouted unknown territory, chased Indians who "jumped" the reservation, recovered stolen livestock, and performed routine military duties in addition to keeping the frontier safe from Indians.

Today, many people have an inaccurate idea of how the "standard" military outpost looked. We of the 20th century envision some sort of "Fort Apache" fortress, with a stockade of pointed logs and wooden, rough log outbuildings. And indeed, a few forts — but only relatively few — were like that.

On the plains, there was little building wood. Most forts were "open," having no outer wall. (Among its other disadvantages, a high wall around a fort cut off any possibility of a cooling breeze.) Most forts put their buildings facing a central parade ground. If an attack occurred on such a fort, the low adobe buildings provided excellent opportunities for intersecting lines of fire against the intruders. Because army forts were so difficult to take by force, most attacks on groups of soldiers took place at some location well

out of sight of a fort. A fairly representative fort of this era was Fort Davis, Texas. (See the map on the previous page.)

In the context of a BOOT HILL campaign, few soldiers in their right minds will engage in quick-draw gunfights. The soldier's flap-holster deters that sort of thing — but once his pistol is drawn, the soldier stands as good a chance as anyone else. With a full bandolier of ammunition, the soldier is well stocked and can hold off the enemy for a long time.

Most forts had a sutler's store, a combination of general store and saloon, where troops congregated on most evenings. Or, if they could get passes, they went into town. When "let loose" on a nearby town, some soldiers could be as high-spirited as Texas cowpunchers just coming off a long trail drive. Wild Bill Hickok had a feud with Capt. Tom Custer (yes, *that* Custer's brother) of the 7th Cavalry that started when he shot two members of that unit in Hays City, killing one.

Generating soldier characters

To start a BOOT HILL game involving characters serving in the U. S. Army, roll dice for each member of a mixed party of soldiers to determine the ranks they hold. (Approximate pay rates for each rank are also given in the table below.) In some situations, duplicate rank results may have to be re-rolled or manipulated in some way. For instance, in a small group of soldiers there would be virtually no chance of two men holding the rank of captain; although the dice do allow for this possibility, the referee should only permit such a result to stand if it is sensible and playable in the context of the adventure or the campaign. Note that under the circumstances described here, no one with the rank of major or above will be found as part of a mixed group of soldiers.

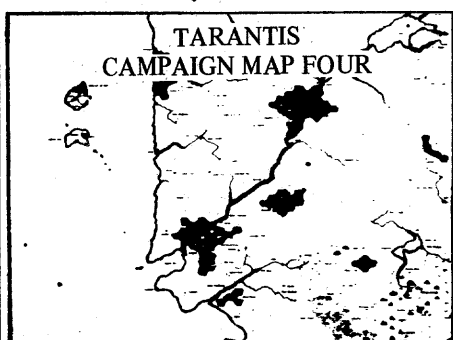
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61-75	Corporal	\$16-20
76-80	Sergeant	\$21-25
81-85	First Sergeant	\$24-36
86-88	Second Lieutenant	\$24-32
89-95	First Lieutenant	\$25-35
96-99	Captain	\$36-44
00	Civilian Scout	\$1-2 ¹
---	Major	\$42-50

¹ — Wages per day; other figures are monthly pay.

Men were paid by their actual rank, and not according to any brevet rank they might have acquired in the Civil War. A brevet rank was a temporary command rank, allowing the bearer to be called by that rank and to command troops, but not giving him the actual pay grade. At Little Big Horn, General Custer (brevet rank) was actually Lieutenant Colonel Custer.

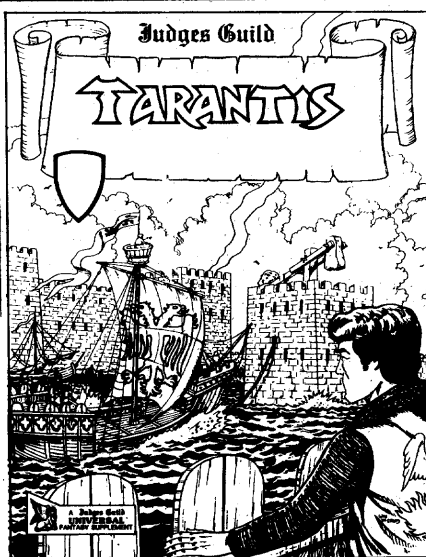
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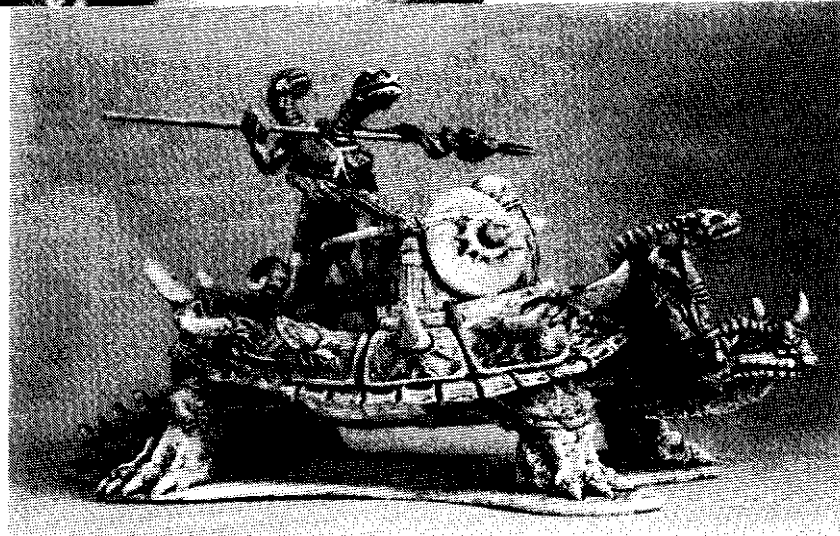
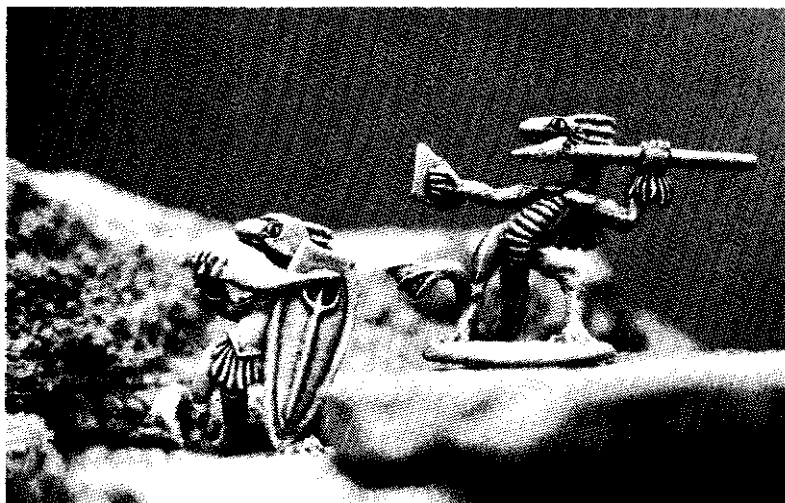
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on campaign. They gain one experience point for every week they campaign, and likewise one point for every enemy they kill. Half of their experience points must be put into raising their bravery through experiencing the rigors of the campaign.

When brawling, soldiers receive a 5% bonus on their hitting and chances to do damage, since they have been trained in melee combat. When firing from any supported, kneeling, standing, or prone position with a rifle, a soldier receives an additional 5% bonus to hit, since soldiers trained on the rifle range in all of these firing positions.

When soldiers gain certain amounts of experience points, they may advance to the next highest level (rank):

Points needed to reach	Rank
30	Private Second Class
45	Private First Class
60	Corporal
75	Sergeant
100	Sergeant Major
150	Second Lieutenant
175	First Lieutenant
200	Captain
250	Major

Because of the style of holsters they wear, soldiers receive no bonus when attempting to draw quickly. And, soldiers cannot "call" their shots, since they train

by shooting at targets and silhouettes. Furthermore, soldiers firing a military-issue weapon do not suffer the -5% penalty for firing while walking.

In terms of the BOOT HILL game, soldiers may improve their Gun Accuracy for either rifle or pistol, but they must be improved separately. Strength and Bravery may be improved by campaigning, as may Experience. Soldiers may have any initial Speed ability score. However, if it starts out as less than 60% it can never be improved to higher than that number.

To equate the soldier's weapons with the BOOT HILL system, treat the military-issue weapons as follows: The Colt NMA is a 6-shot SAR; the .52 calibre Sharps rifle is a one-shot Army rifle. There is no carbine analogous with the single-shot .52 calibre, so use the statistics for the Civil War carbine, except that the weapon holds one shot instead of seven. Additionally, the following adaptations are suggested:

All army rifles are treated as buffalo guns in terms of stunning chances. Army carbines are not. Military rifles have a lessened chance of jamming (only a 1 in 100 chance), since breech loaders are not too difficult to clear.

For game purposes, all crew-served weapons require a crew of four, commanded by an NCO or an officer. Cannons may not function with less than two gunners. Gatling guns may fire with two

gunners or less, but still have a basic crew of five (including the commander) to start.

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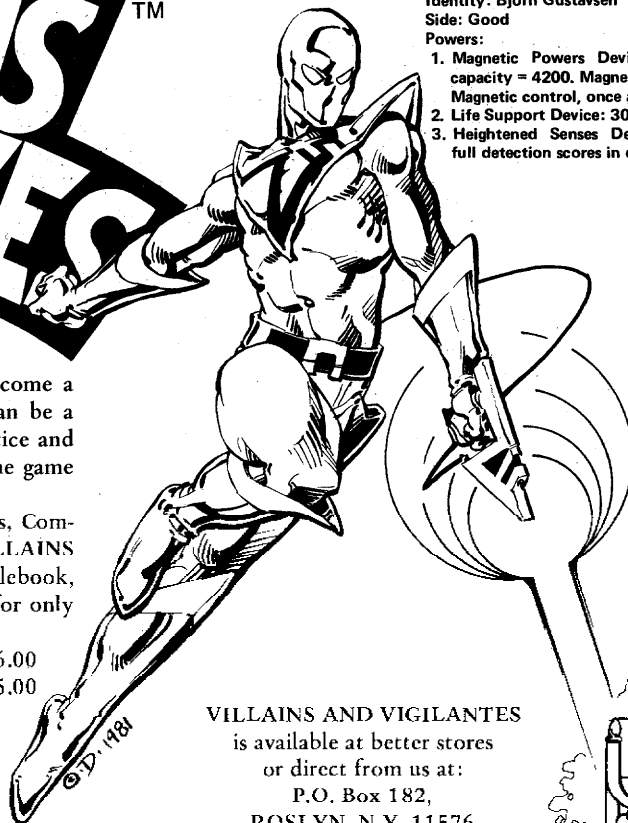
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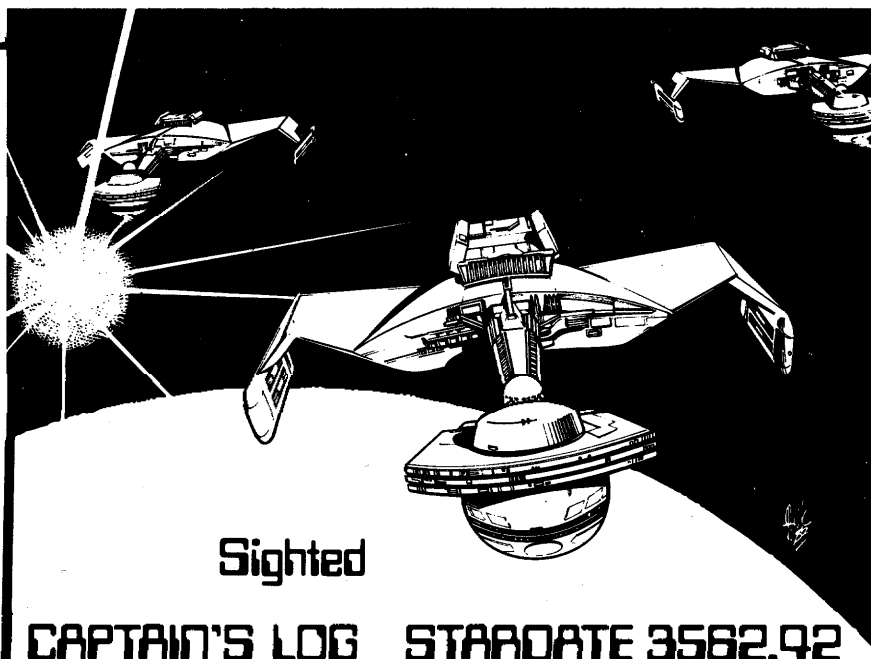
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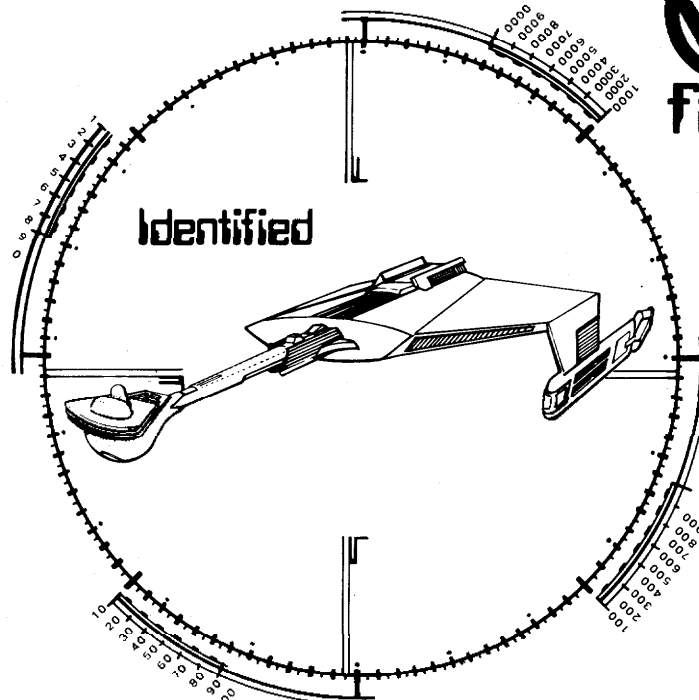


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Who was Baba Yaga, the magic-user lady who made the Hut artifact in the DMG?

According to David Nalle's assessment of her in issue #53 of DRAGON® Magazine (p. 32), Baba Yaga was a cannibalistic ogre-witch who dwelled in old Russia. She was chaotic evil, with all the powers of a 20th-level magic-user, a 15th-level illusionist, a 10th-level druid, and a 12th-level fighter. Her "vital statistics" were: AC 7, 24" move, 150 HP, 80% magic resistance, hit only by magical weapons, 8' in height (she's non-human), and her ability scores are S 22, I 24, W 17, D 16, C 18, CH 2. The sight of her causes *fear* in all, -3 to save vs. spell, and anyone looking into her eyes must save vs. spell at -5 or be *charmed* into doing her bidding. If her spells fail or if she's feeling especially mean, she'll attack with her two clawed hands and her fanged mouth; each set of claws does 2-16 points damage, plus 1-12 points for poison if a save fails against it, and her bite does 1-10 damage. Avoid her at all costs.

Can a Dungeon Master give away magical items in an adventure and then later say that the items operate at reduced effectiveness or have wholly new powers?

It may be that the DM had planned ahead that certain magic items would indeed change their abilities over time (a *wand of wonder*, for instance, constantly does unpredictable things), but often DMs alter magical items as a way of bringing the campaign back into order if they find they've given away some powerful items that are too tough to manage. This is not a good way of handling the situation, since it does violate the spirit of the rules, but it is one way to handle things. It would be better to set up situations working within the rules than to arbitrarily say, "Well, your +4 sword is now a +1 sword." Players will accept changes done within the rules better than if they feel (and rightly so) that they are getting rooked.

What are mithral and adamantite?

Mithral is a very rare metallic ore that has a cloudy silver luster in mined form, but when refined and made pure becomes brilliant and silvery. It is soft, as metals go, and is easily fashioned into jewelry by dwarven, gnomish, human, and elven craftsmen. However, it is primarily used in alloys with pure steel to fashion weapons, shields, and armor; mithral/steel alloys retain magical dwomeers much better even than the purest iron, and they may be enchanted to +4 quality.

Adamantite is an even rarer ore that seems to come in several basic hues: brown-gold, blue-silver, and green-silver; a few cases are known of black adamantite ore (from drow enclaves). Adamantite is extremely difficult to mine because of its hardness, and must be made molten to be of any use at all. Usually only dwarves, gnomes and humans have access to adamantite, since it is found very deep in the earth and in very small quantities, though drow are able to find enough of it to make their armor and weapons. Adamantite must be alloyed with high-grade steel to be usable in making items, primarily because it is too rare to "waste" by making pure adamantite devices. Adamantite-alloyed armor and weapons may be enchanted to +5 quality. It may be

that pure adamantite can be enchanted to +6, but this is uncertain. Drow-made adamantite weapons are ruined by exposure to sunlight, because of the loss of special radiations that keep their powers operating; normally, adamantite items suffer no such problems. There are rumors that githzerai (see the FIEND FOLIO™ Tome) house themselves in adamantite fortresses, but this is extremely unlikely and is probably a rumor only; wasting adamantite on making forts is hard to excuse, and it is just not found in such quantities.

There are no commonly circulated mithral or adamantite coins; if there were, they would be almost unusable by virtue of their great cost. A 1 g.p. weight of mithral would command upwards of 50 g.p.; an equal amount of adamantite would be much more expensive than that.

Can a player character become a free-willed vampire and be played like any other player character?

No. A player character who becomes a vampire also becomes an non-player character under the Dungeon Master's control; otherwise, the character is too powerful and the game balance starts to disappear as the PC vampire vampirizes the countryside. All undead creatures should be NPCs, to emphasize the humanocentric nature of the AD&D™ game system.

In the Players Handbook it states that rangers will not congregate in groups larger than three, but in *The Lord of the Rings* by J. R. R. Tolkien this restriction does not appear.

The rangers in the AD&D game are not the rangers in Tolkien's books; granted, the two are related — but in the final analysis, AD&D rangers are different. The AD&D game, more broadly, should not be interpreted too literally in the light of books and materials not developed by TSR, Inc.; though individual DMs and players may do so if they wish, they should note that, for example, Tolkien's elves are immortal and AD&D elves are just long-lived. The AD&D system is not *LOTR*.

Can a DM award experience points to players for solving riddles, defusing traps, setting up clever ambushes, and so forth? If so, how many points should be awarded?

This is a problem for individual DMs to resolve, though I would recommend giving out experience points for such actions, since doing so tends to encourage further creativity on the players' parts. As a rule of thumb, no more than 100 experience points or so should be awarded for exceptionally clever actions; most deeds that involve solving riddles and the like would probably earn about 10-20 experience points or so.

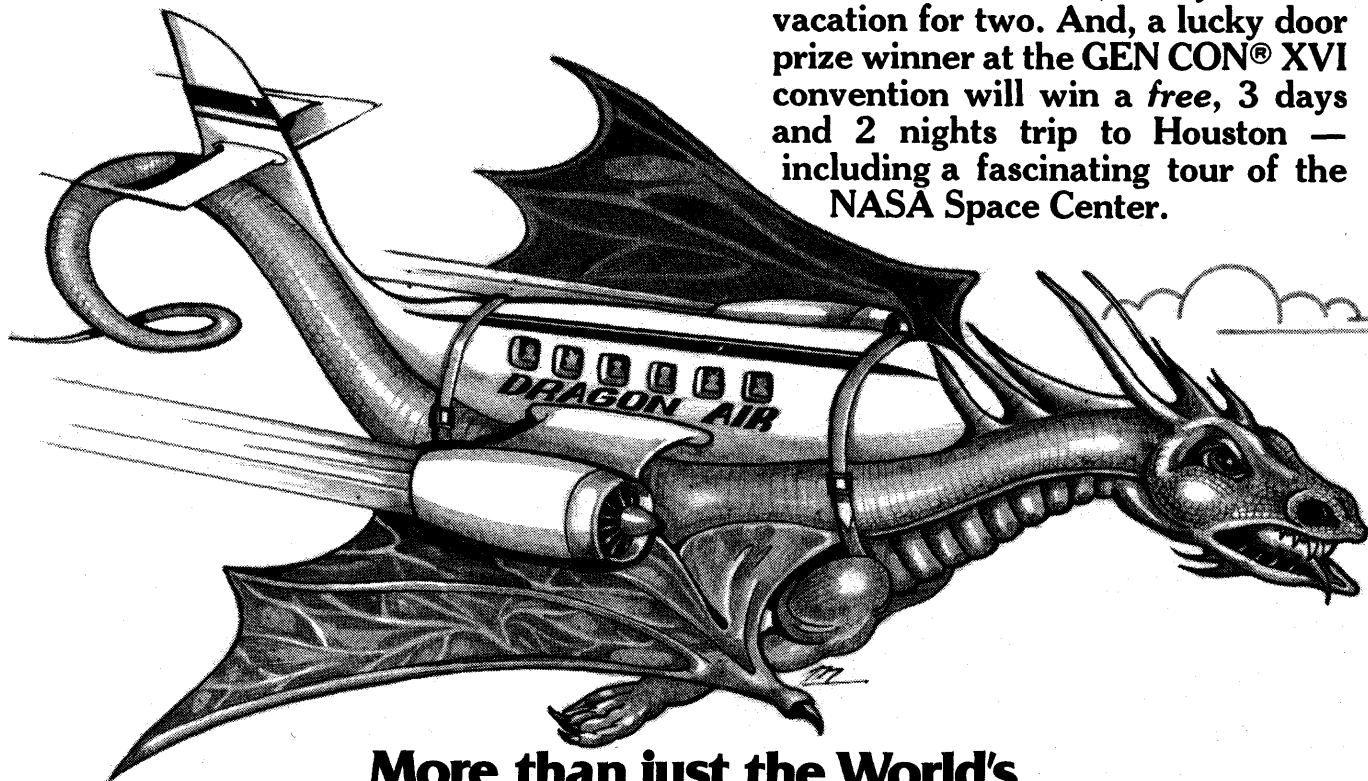
If player characters manage to kill off every monster in a dungeon, can they then take the dungeon over for their own?

This depends upon the DM, but actually there is no reason why the characters couldn't do this. In truth, it might not be such a bad idea, from the standpoint of campaign balance; the cost involved in renovating the ex-dungeon, hiring workers, getting new materials, and so forth will eat up enormous sums of cash. Whenever the players leave the dungeon to go somewhere,

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new monsters (a few) might move in if they haven't properly warded and guarded the place. Characters involved in fixing the place up won't be able to adventure for a long time if they personally supervise everything. Maybe the ruler of the dungeon had some friends from other places (maybe even from some Outer Planes) who plan to drop in sometime; they might not like seeing that the ownership of the dungeon has changed hands. Of course, there will always be the chance that things might tunnel up from below one day . . . like drow, mind flayers, troglodytes, orcs, purple worms, umber hulks — the list goes on and on. You get the idea.

In the old *Giants in the Earth* column, some of the heroes were given a percentile score for every ability of 18, even those characteristics like intelligence and wisdom that have no percentile score given to them in the AD&D rules. Why was this done?

Originally such 18-percentile scores were given as a basis for comparison; so many of the heroes and heroines in that column had ability scores of 18 that it was thought there should be some way to further differentiate between (for instance) two characters who both have 18 intelligence. Such percentile values can be easily disregarded, since they have no function in the AD&D rules.

Numerous modules refer to a game called knucklebones. How is this played in terms of the AD&D game?

See the DMG, Appendix F, for a brief description of gambling games that could be used within a scenario.

In reading through past issues of DRAGON Magazine, I noticed that several times characters and monsters have been described differently from the presentations in the official AD&D books. I now have two different versions of Circe, Medea, the phoenix, and several others. Which version is correct?

DRAGON Magazine frequently prints material that is not necessarily considered official, but is presented as a reasonable alternative to already existing material. Often two or more writers have differing views, taken from different sources, on how a certain personage or monster should appear in the AD&D game. Presenting these different perspectives on the character or monster is done to give the DM the freedom to select a version that best fits the DM's campaign and personal conception of what such a being would be like.

Is everything that appears in DRAGON Magazine an official rule change or addition?

No. Virtually all of the magazine's contents are *not* official, excepting only those writings that are defined as official, either by their nature (such as most articles written by E. Gary Gygax, which are "automatically" official) or by a note prefacing the article that indicates it should be considered official. For the most part, the material in DRAGON Magazine is intended only as possible suggestions for referees and players to adopt into their campaigns if they so choose. No one is obligated to use *any* of the material in the magazine — but if you try something out and you find you like it, have fun with it.

Why are there so many contradictions between the Basic and Expert D&D® sets and the Advanced D&D® books?

The DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® game and the ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® game are two different products, and are not meant to be meshed. The similarity in names is confusing, but the game systems are very different from each other, in the way that both are different from the *Runequest*® game system or the *Traveller*® game system. DMs and players should avoid mixing the D&D® and AD&D™ systems at all times.

What happens if a GAMMA WORLD® mutant hits an AD&D character with the power *de-evolution*?

The AD&D character, unlike GAMMA WORLD characters, has no resistance to mental attacks or radiation attacks from GAMMA WORLD monsters or devices. *De-evolution* will automatically strip an AD&D character of one level per GAMMA

WORLD combat round (10 seconds), meaning that 6 life levels will be lost per AD&D round, no saving throw allowed. This was confirmed by Jim Ward, the co-author of the GAMMA WORLD rules. And you thought vampires were bad! AD&D characters drained of life levels by *de-evolution* simply die and do not become undead. If raised, the character so affected will be a zero-level character.

Can a character who is paralyzed yell for help? Can such a character use psionics? Cast spells?

No. Yes, because the mind is unaffected. No, unless the being that is paralyzed has innate spell-like powers like those of a demon, devil, beholder, or lamia (for example), in which case these powers can still be used at will.

What does the inch sign (") mean in reference to distances and length?

When discussing height or small items, it means inches. When discussing spell ranges, missile ranges, and spell areas of effect indoors, it means 1" = 10 feet. When discussing spell ranges and missile ranges outdoors, it means 1" = 10 yards (30 feet); however, areas of effect for spells are always measured in tens of feet, never tens of yards.

What's the difference between a secret and a concealed door?

Secret doors are constructed so that their function as a portal is not immediately obvious; false backs on fireplaces, revolving bookcases, and sliding sections of stonework are examples of this. Concealed doors are just doors hidden by an intervening object, like a tapestry, a stack of boxes, a door covered over with plaster, and so forth.

Do constitution bonuses for monks, rangers, and first-level half-ogre characters (who all start with two hit dice) apply to both hit dice as well as all hit dice earned after first level?

Yes.

How can you handle pregnancy in AD&D games?

This is one of those aspects of AD&D gaming that is left up to the DM's decisions; all campaigns are different, and the elves (for example) within one campaign could legitimately have longer gestation periods than those in another campaign. As a general rule of thumb, it can probably be asserted that elves have the longest pregnancy times (possibly as much as 2 years); dwarves, gnomes, humans, halflings, and half-elves are all about the same, between 8 and 12 months, and orcs and humanoids would have shorter gestation periods, possible ranging down to 6 months. These are only suggestions, however; what the DM decides for his campaign is the final answer.

Some of the characters described by Gary Gygax in your magazine have an attribute labeled CO. What is this?

CO stands for Comeliness, a new attribute described by Gary Gygax (in issue #67 of DRAGON magazine) to represent physical beauty/handsomeness. Unlike other attributes such as strength, comeliness has a range from -8 (for the ugliest half-orc) to +25 (for the most beautiful elf). Scores of +10 to +13 are average. The use of a comeliness attribute is up to the DM and the players of an AD&D group.

How can any character be able to take more physical damage than an ancient huge red dragon?

AD&D gaming is based on what is sometimes called "fantasy realism." In reality, none of us humans would have a chance against a monster the size of a red dragon; however, AD&D gaming is not reality. It reflects very well the kind of "fantasy realism" found in myths, legends, tales, and modern fantasy literature, wherein it is possible to be so lucky, gifted, and powerful that one could even be tougher than a dragon. Hit points not only reflect bodily damage; they also reflect combat skill, the ability to sidestep an otherwise fatal blow, and the blessing of a patron deity, as well as innate luck (and perhaps other attributes

of an intangible nature). Obviously, it cannot be argued that even the toughest fighter in an AD&D game has more body mass than a red dragon; however, it can be argued that a warrior, especially a heroic warrior on the level of Beowulf, Roland, or Conan, could be skilled enough to give a dragon a bad time in combat. After all, it's the essence of heroic fantasy — not humdrum reality — that the game reflects.

Can half-ogres be barbarians?

They can behave in a barbarous fashion, but cannot be of the barbarian character class. They lack the dexterity and agility of humans and cannot perform many of the barbarians' basic skills. Half-ogres could, however, be raised in barbarian tribes and be considered members of such a tribe, though they would still be of the fighter class.

Why do half-ogres have such low charismas?

No one really trusts them. They often have their ogre parent's nastier habits, and many of them are chaotic evil. While they might not look particularly ugly (though some of them do) and might appear quite competent and powerful, social prejudice

and their own behavior tends to strongly limit their charismatic effect toward other races.

How do half-ogres feel about other humanoid creatures?

Use the "Humanoid Racial Preferences Table" in the DMG; half-ogres will feel about the same way as regular ogres do toward other creatures.

Do half-ogre characters (as described in DRAGON Magazine #73) count as "giant-class humanoids" for purposes of rangers' attacks against them?

No; half-ogres, like half-orcs, are not entirely "humanoid," and rangers do not get any bonuses against them like they do against normal (full-blooded) ogres.

Why are the ability scores for half-ogres rolled differently than for other races?

Certain of the ability scores for half-ogres are considerably higher or lower than the human and demi-human racial norms. The change in die-rolling the ability scores is intended to reflect this difference.

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Page advice: How to get published

Questions and answers from the TSR Acquisitions Department

What is the Acquisitions Department?

The Acquisitions Department is part of the TSR Games Division. We review materials submitted to the TSR Games Division for possible publication. The department was founded in the fall of 1982 to handle the increasing number of submissions that the Games Division was receiving. Our function is primarily managerial and editorial. We have no organizational connection with the Design Department within the Games Division, or with Dragon Publishing, and we deal exclusively with freelance submissions.

What, exactly, do you review?

Modules and games, mostly. The bulk of our workload currently consists of modules (most have been for the AD&D™ system) and games for the SPI line. We also handle magazine games for Dragon Publishing (for AREST™ and S&T® magazines). We do look at many other types of games besides role-playing games and simulation games; we are currently most interested in games with a strong fantasy or SF theme.

Does TSR look at other products?

Some material is processed by other departments and divisions. Dragon Publishing handles manuscripts and some artwork for DRAGON®, S&T, ARES, and AMAZING™ magazines. ENDLESS QUEST™ books are also handled by Dragon Publishing. Toy proposals should be sent to the Games Division. All these departments and divisions have guidelines that differ from those for game submissions, so be sure to send your inquiry to the right division.

Is there anything you won't look at?

We are primarily interested in finished products. Submissions should include a complete, ready-to-play game or finished module manuscript. In certain cases, a designer can send a letter of inquiry outlining the project in general terms before any work has begun, though we usually only accept such an approach from established professional game designers. For modules, the quality of the submissions varies so greatly that unless we are already familiar with your work, we need a completed manuscript. If you don't want to chance a whole module at first, we will review a detailed project outline and a short sample of your writing (say, 10 typed manuscript pages), and then get back to you.

Certain types of material are not high on our priority list; for example, sports games, abstract chess-like games, clones of existing games (like Monopoly® variants), and so on. We are not currently interested in DM-assisted computer programs for any of our role-playing games (random character generators, and so on) or in computer game programs. And occasionally someone sends in an idea that is unusable for copyright reasons (for example, a Smurf module); please try not to tie a submission to copyrighted properties other than those owned by TSR, Inc.

We are also not interested in minor variants or additions to existing game systems; for example, a new monster, character class, spell, or weapon type. In the Games Division, we deal with larger-scope products — modules, rulebooks, games, and the like. We just do not have time to review and process limited embellishments to existing systems.

Certain types of modules will always be rejected. Random dungeons or scenarios that require unrelieved "hack 'n' slash" tactics will be returned. Gauntlets that channel a party down a single path are difficult to design well — we return a lot of these. Modules that require evil-aligned player characters or that contain overly graphic or tasteless descriptions will be rejected (as a rule of thumb for questions of taste, stick to the standards of the Comic or TV codes).

In addition, we are not currently accepting modules set in the WORLD OF GREYHAWK™ setting or in specific Outer Planes listed in the Players Handbook and the DEITIES & DEMIGODS™ Cyclopedia.

What is the best way to approach TSR with a game or module?

First, write to the Submissions Director (in care of TSR, Inc., P.O. Box 756, Lake Geneva WI 53147) and ask for a Submissions Packet, especially if this is your first submission to TSR, Inc. Do not send a game or an idea without reading the information in the packet. It contains a disclosure form which gives us permission to evaluate your submission. Also, we prefer not to handle general inquiries by phone. Since the Acquisitions Department also does development and production editing on freelance submissions, calls tend to disrupt the work schedule.

The first thing we have to know is the general parameters of the product: what type of game (family, SPI, module), its theme, how many players, target age group, difficulty level, and so on — exact details of game mechanics or plot lines

are not necessary at first. A general outline of what makes the submission distinctive or unusual is helpful.

What product types would you like to see more of?

Over the next year, we would like to see more modules for games other than the AD&D™ system, especially for the STAR FRONTIERS™ game. We kept GAMMA WORLD® submissions on hold until the revision of the game came out recently, so now we'll be needing more of those, too. In general, fewer designers write non-fantasy material, so good-quality material of that sort has a lot less competition.

What would you consider "good material"?

As a rule of thumb, if a submission meets or exceeds the quality of our current products, we would consider it good material.

We like module submissions with well-developed plot lines, internal consistency, good writing, innovative use of detail, enough detail so that any referee can run the encounters as the designer intends, and a presentation that gives the referee all the information he needs in the order he needs it.

Are there other considerations?

Of course. Module manuscript length is important. Most of our commercial

modules are 32 pages long; this is the most efficient length for printing purposes. At a ratio of roughly 4 manuscript (typed) pages, to 1 finished (typeset) page, this means a submission should be around 120 pages in length. Beginning designers tend to have difficulty filling this length; experienced designers usually have difficulty cutting their text down. The difference between the two types of submissions is usually in the depth and development of the encounter information detail.

Module formatting — how the material is organized and presented — is also important. For example an AD&D module is usually set up with boxed information to be read to the players, while a TOP SECRET module is not. Some product lines, like the STAR FRONTIERS modules, have a very consistent format; others are not so rigidly structured. If you have any questions, ask us. Some information acquired at the outset can save hours of work later.

Existing products for the game system are another consideration — for example, there might be a glut of modules on the market dealing with lizard men. Under those circumstances, we would be reluctant to do another one. Strange settings, like Oriental or Amerind cultures, automatically have a more limited market, so it's a good idea to check with us first before doing anything special.

Games are really tough to succeed with; the market for games is much more uncertain than the market for modules. Good playability and innovative mechanics are very important. A "catch-up" feature of some sort is desirable in family games, allowing someone who is behind a chance to win. The game must be fun to play.

What exactly makes up a completed submission?

For modules, the main text includes an introduction, background, encounter keys, conclusion, and any special sections like new magic or an "alien update file." Charts and tables should be separated from the text and included at the back. Maps should also be separated from the main text, neatly drawn, and clearly labelled. All words or numbers that appear on the maps should be repeated on a special page (these bits of text are called "map tags"). Maps should be treated as an integral part of the submission, and not just dashed off. Standard map symbols should be used.

Games should come with complete rules and components, including maps or board, dice, playing pieces, cards (if any), and so on. SPI-style games should also have a complete counter set and a counter manifest (a blow-up of a counter sheet with each counter reproduced in the position it will occupy in the final sheet), map tags, and tables. These should be separated from the text.

What about art for modules?

Usually we don't accept art as part of a freelance submission. We don't know what size such illustrations can be until the module has been typeset, and by that time our deadlines are usually too short to deal with freelance artists.

How about word processors?

We accept printout manuscripts if they are dark enough to photocopy (double dot matrix). Normal standards apply otherwise.

For authors who use text editors on their home computers, we accept diskettes that are compatible with the Atari "Text Wizard" or Apple "Applewriter" software. A complete printout of the text should be included, and it should be dark enough to photocopy. File length should be kept to 170 sectors or less.

What happens to a submission?

First, the project is screened by the Product Planning Manager for whatever product line the game falls into. These include D&D® or AD&D™ games, non-fantasy role-playing games, family games, and specialty games (the last being SPI games, historical simulations, and so on). The Product Manager is responsible for maintaining the balanced growth of the line; how many products of what type, consistency within the line, and so on. A project not approved by the PPM in charge is returned to the person who submitted it. If a submission is favorably reviewed by the PPM, the product goes back to the Acquisitions Department for evaluation and testing (at this stage, modules are sometimes returned for a revised draft). The third step is an approval stage, which brings in the Marketing, Purchasing, and Finance Departments. (In the case of standard-sized modules, this step should move fairly quickly — several weeks.) If the project is approved, an agreement is then reached. This will nearly always include a rework to be completed by the author. The receipt of a satisfactory finished project will set the payment procedure in motion. It can take as long as a year or more for this entire process to run from start to finish, though we haven't been operating as a separate department long enough to do more than guess at what the long-term average time will be.

Is it difficult to get published?

Yes. It can be a long and frustrating experience. It isn't easy, and the odds of making a lot of money are not good. It takes hard work, persistence, and a commitment to continually improve. Even then, there are no guarantees. However, there are payoffs — like seeing your work in print — that go a long way toward balancing this.

Also, once we know a designer can turn in quality work, on time, we will want to continue to keep in touch.

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Off the Shelf



Aliens, dinosaurs, and more

Reviews by Chris Henderson

TALBOT MUNDY: MESSENGER OF DESTINY

D.M. Grant, Compiler

Grant Books 0-937986-46-1 \$20.00

For those people who have not heard of Talbot Mundy, he was a fantasy and adventure writer. Many critics believe that he was a better writer than even Robert E. Howard — a debatable point.

For those readers who are already fans of the creator of Tros and the Purple Pirate, they will be pleased to learn that Donald M. Grant has spent the last decade compiling the most complete bibliography of Mundy's work to date. The bibliography section of the book is not only a simple listing of his works but also a compilation of comments about these stories. The book also includes a short autobiography, appreciations penned by friends and fellow authors, and a number of rare illustrations. In addition, copies of old book covers, magazine illustrations, photos of Mundy (either alone or with family and friends), and personal letters appear in the compilation.

Since bio-bibliographies are fairly specialized books, only dedicated fans of an author really have much use for them. Fans of Talbot Mundy will have a use for this one. This book is a finely made hardback edition which deals with the subject matter accurately. Grant's love for Mundy's writing shows through in the care which was taken in the production of this work.

A FIELD GUIDE TO DINOSAURS

The Diagram Group

Avon Books 0-380-83519-3 \$8.95

Unlike other dinosaur books that have recently been published, *A Field Guide to Dinosaurs* stresses fact, not artwork. Though artistic renderings of favorite saurians are fairly standard pieces, the information within this book is precise, plentiful and easily located. *A Field Guide to Dinosaurs* supplies such interesting bits of information as the Latin names of the ancient reptiles and their equivalent English translations, the locations of where each type of dinosaur lived (maps included), and the size, length, height, weight, and age in which the creatures lived. Fossil drawings are found throughout the text, and certain sketches

illustrate the size differences between the dinosaurs and men, Volkswagens, planes, and so on. Museum listings are given for the best displays around the world, including what each display has to offer. There are also a number of simple to read articles which go over the latest theories about the dinosaurs.

Written like an enjoyable textbook, *A Field Guide to Dinosaurs* is the best up-to-date saurian book on the market today. If one wants to add some new wrinkles to a campaign, or just wants to remain informed about dinosaurs, then this book is the one to purchase.

INVASION: EARTH

Harry Harrison

Ace Books 0-441-37154-X \$2.75

A spaceship appears over the Pacific, travels at an unheard of speed across America, and finally lands in Central Park. After the city police and the Army have argued over whose jurisdiction the ship is in, an Army team is finally sent inside to investigate.

Within the alien craft, the members of the team find two dead aliens and kill a third alien who attacks them. As the

search continues within the spaceship, the team meets an alien prisoner of a species different than that of the two alien pilots and the attacker. The prisoner informs the team that Earth is in danger of attack and that its citizens must plan their strategy for interstellar war.

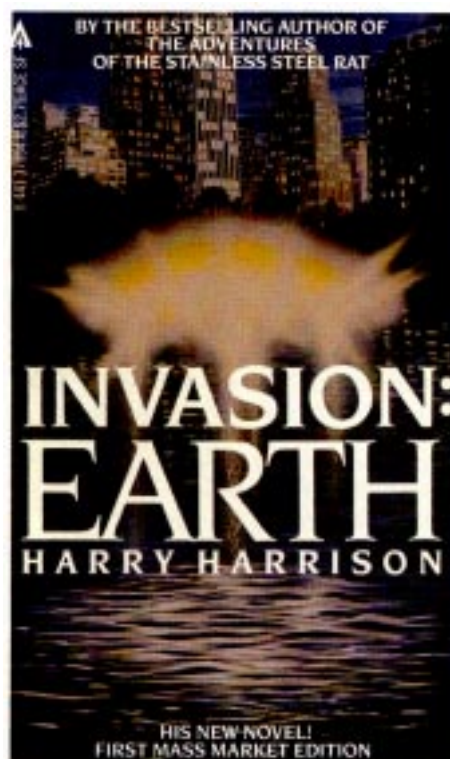
Because the alien prisoner's story is reinforced by the arrival of an entire fleet of hostile aliens, a united Earth begins to prepare for war. Despite the military efforts, the war against the aliens takes a turn for the worse. Faced with this dilemma, there comes the discovery that maybe the alien prisoner was not being as honest as everyone had originally thought. How to contact the other alien fleet, what to say to this other race if contact is possible, and how much trust to place in these aliens become the major issues of the novel.

Harrison tells a fine story, with Earth in a Vietnam-caught-between-the-superpowers situation. The tale is a grim study of imperialism, illustrating what it's like to be the weaker race caught in a power struggle of the stronger ones. Like all Harrison stories, the plot of *Invasion: Earth* flows swiftly; scenes are paced with never a pause or dragging moment.

Another plus for the book is that it is illustrated by artist Evan Ten Broeck Steadman. All of the plates are done in black-and-white, but the odd usage of grey tones lends itself well to the off-center direction of the storyline.

Unfortunately, though, is Harrison's ending. After taking a strong stand throughout the book in favor of military action in desperate situations, the last lines of the novel seek to negate this effort. Whether the author sought to balance an overly militaristic outlook or to make the liberal character (a Russian, no less) look foolish, the outcome does not work and leaves the reader wondering what the point of the novel is.

All in all, however, *Invasion: Earth* is a good, solid novel, and one worth reading.



TEA WITH THE BLACK DRAGON

R.A. MacAvoy

Bantam Books 0-553-23205-3 \$2.75

Tea with the Black Dragon is one of the most unusual, and yet most delightful, books to appear in many years. It is the story of Martha MacNamara. Having come to California at her daughter's

request, Martha begins to worry when, after having checked into her hotel, her daughter does not contact her and she can find no trace of her. In between waiting and worrying, Martha meets a strange Chinese gentleman named Mayland Long.

Bored by his present life, Long offers to help Martha find her daughter. They set out together, plunging into the world of computers and video politics (her daughter's specialty). During their search, they come to learn as much about themselves and each other as they do the daughter's past and present troubles.

Long is portrayed as a bookish Doc Savage. He needs little sleep, is a skilled, calm fighter, is well-read, and can become knowledgeable on an unknown subject with but one night's research.

Martha, on the other hand, appears to be more emotional and have less direction in her life than Long. She practices Zen Buddhism and remains faithful to her beliefs. As a career, she plays the fiddle. However, just as Long envies the life she has led, so Martha envies his.

With two such diverse characters, it is only natural that opposites attract. So, in part, *Tea with the Black Dragon* is a love story, but it is a bizarre one. Long claims to have been (and does deeply believe that he was) an Imperial Black Chinese Dragon. By the end of the book, there is no proof to support his claim, and yet the reader is compelled to believe him. And, so is Martha.

Be warned, this novel is *light* fantasy at best. If gaudy magics and swordplay are musts, then this one is not for you. If, however, a quiet fable containing the most unusual, yet uniquely compatible, adventuring couple since John Steed and Emma Peel is what you're after, then track this one down quickly.

SPELLSINGER

Alan Dean Foster

Warner Books 0-446-90352-3 \$2.95

Now, for those who do want the gaudy magics and swinging swords, Foster's newest, *Spellsinger*, just might be the novel to read.

Spellsinger is an epic fantasy, with a suitable epic cover filled with warriors. But before running straight for the local bookstore, be warned that this novel is, in fact, a comedy.

Jonathan Thomas Meriweather from California has been transported into another dimension by a wizard. Because this dimension is populated by intelligent animals who fight, live, drink and apparently copulate with humans, it is not surprising to discover that this wizard is a turtle. The wizard, Clothahump, has brought Meriweather to this dimension because he needs another wizard to help him fight a great evil. Unfortunately, the word *wizard* translates as *engineer* in the English language. Since Meriweather is a



part-time janitor (sanitary engineer), he is the one selected. The comedy stays at this level throughout.

Analyzing *Spellsinger* is not easy. The author does a good job of explaining this world's evolution, making mistakes neither in the social order he has set up nor with the mores he has established for it. However, there is nothing particularly outstanding about this book. Either one wants to read a comedy with no other merits or one doesn't.

And that is the whole of the situation. Foster infuses none of the characters with anything new. Preparing for the great conflict with evil, Clothahump and Meriweather gather a number of others to assist them, but none of the characters strike much of a chord within the reader. The bickering and constant sexual references are amusing, but the book has no substance, and, indeed, no ending, either.

Lacking in nobility, or even a point, *Spellsinger* is void of feeling or mood. It has comedy aplenty, but little else.

SET OF WHEELS

Robert Thurston

Berkley Books 0-425-05820-4 \$2.50

Judging from his past credits like the *Battlestar Galactica* books, one might not think that Robert Thurston could write a novel such as *Set of Wheels*. He did, though, and people are enjoying it.

Simply, the story concerns a bleak future: the government has practically fallen into ruin, and things are so bad that hardly anyone has noticed. Cities are controlled by their inhabitants; religious groups are buying property in the southwest; people's dreams are shattered daily; and the welfare state of America is an abysmal failure.

The hero, Lee Kestner, has one simple desire: a car. Trapped in a stagnant world where one is constantly bored, Kestner wants a set of power-charged wheels. He wants to bandit around, screech his tires, and generally have a good time. As most people know, however, life does not operate that easily.

Kestner travels from one adventure to another, learning about life and himself in what is an incredible saga. Thurston's storytelling underplays all of the action. Rather than concentrating on the gratuitous violence inherent with the future he has created, Thurston studies the feelings and sensitivities of his central characters. Everything is seen through Kestner's eyes; Thurston never alters his point of view, so the story only matures as rapidly as Kestner does. And mature he does, as would anyone in his set of situations.

Another positive point of this novel is that the author apparently had fun writing it. Thurston had a story he wanted to relate, which is exactly what he did. However, there will be no sequel to Kestner's adventures, even though readers might sorely want one.

TRANSFORMER

M.A. Foster

DAW Books 0-87997-814-7 \$2.50

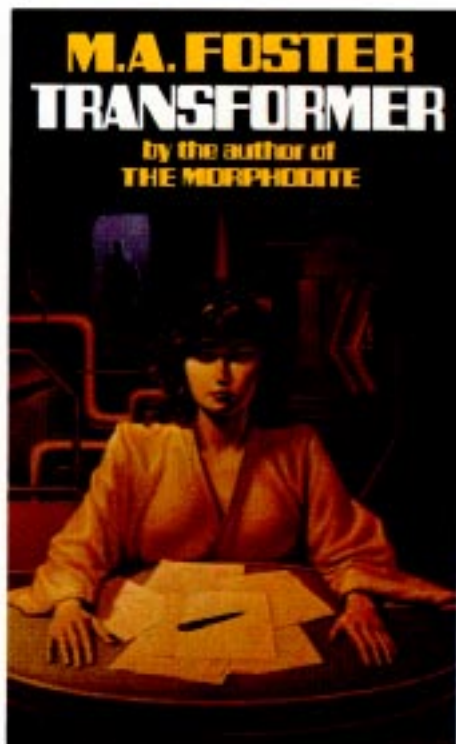
Several years ago, M.A. Foster wrote a stunning book, *The Morphodite*. Although the storyline was neatly resolved, enough raw angles remained so that more pages could be easily generated. Luckily for Foster's audience, the wait was not too long.

For those readers fortunate enough to find a copy of *The Morphodite*, buy the book at once. For those who cannot acquire it, there is no need to worry since Foster's latest work, *Transformer*, is a novel that can stand on its own without having to read its predecessor.

The story begins with enough background to both inform the reader and arouse his curiosity about the Morphodite and its enemies. Even though the Morphodite was neutralized, its creators still fear it. The creature is supposedly happy, having retreated from the mainstream of human existence to care for orphans with a woman it loves. Yet its creators fear that someday the Morphodite may remember things it should not be able to recollect and come after them seeking vengeance for their crimes.

To spare themselves and future rulers of their council, the creators send their best assassins to finish the job they bungled in the previous novel. By doing this, the council sets off exactly the chain of events they had wished to avoid. As the killers miss their mark the first time, the Morphodite retreats, looking for the truth and tracking it to the hidden recesses in which it has been stored.

The importance of Foster's work is not the events that occur in his story, but



rather what the story has to say. Unlike other books of this genre, *Transformer* is more a history of the emotions of man than just another science-fiction novel filled with just futuristic trappings.

The Morphodite is a creature capable of changing its physical appearance, from one male or female form into another. Each transformation costs it a number of years of its life as it becomes younger each time. It cannot transform itself into an older being, only a younger one. And yet, as it grows older, each younger entity it becomes is wiser than the last. The insights and added maturity brought to the creature after each change make *Transformer* a book to be studied as well as read. Even the minor characters have numerous valuable insights to relate — the death scene of the Morphodite's friend Pompeo exemplifies the revelations into human nature this novel possesses.

Although *Transformer* is entertaining, its intent is meant as much more. The author depicts a number of normal human situations, but often develops them with twists different from those the reader expects. Moving beyond many of science fiction's stereotypical reactions, Foster has established a more mainstream flow to his latest work.

In conclusion, even though the novel *Transformer* is filled with both radical and standard science-fiction props, it is not merely another SF story. *Transformer* is a hard-hitting, searching book which tackles the causes of the problems it presents. The Morphodite is not a one for stop-gap measures, and neither is Foster. As if teaching a class in deductive reasoning, Foster leads the reader from chapter to chapter, teaching new ways by which to perceive the world.

AGAINST INFINITY

Gregory Benford

Timescape Books 671-45901-5 \$14.95

Evidently Gregory Benford is not content with the Nebula, Campbell Memorial and British Science Fiction Association awards he received in 1980 for his novel *Timescape*. The amount of detail and hard work Benford poured into his latest effort, *Against Infinity*, seems to support this line of reasoning.

The action of *Against Infinity* takes place on Ganymede, one of the moons of Jupiter. Manuel Lopez, the protagonist, is a first-generation native, part of a human settlement whose mission is to terraform Ganymede. The work is slow; the atmosphere remains poisonous to humans after generations; the surface temperatures are extremely low; and there are no native foodstuffs.

The only break the men of Ganymede have for their never-ending work is the semi-regular hunting expeditions. These trips were designed to minimize the herds of mutants released on the moon's surface by Earth biologists. Actually the hunting trips are cleverly disguised opportunities for the men to gather information on the strangest aspect of their new world: a nearly mythic, randomly destructive, ever-changing, totally unpredictable thing known for years as the Aleph.

The Aleph is a relic from a time past. No one knows who built or grew it, or how it got to Ganymede. Since the first encounter, the Aleph has remained a mystery to the men of Ganymede.

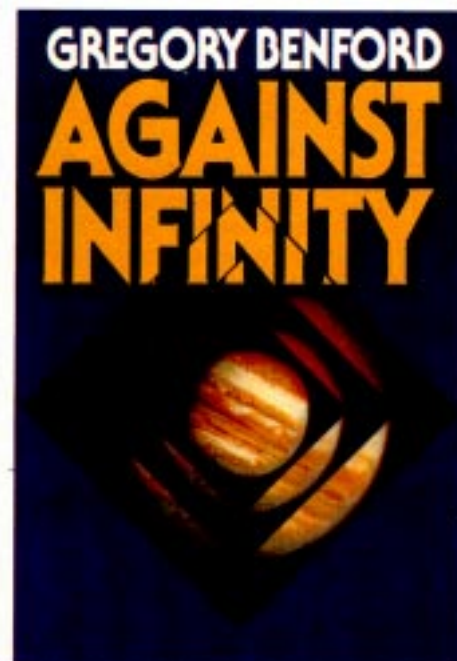
Manuel, a very young adolescent at the book's opening, wants to hunt the Aleph. Over the years he tracks it, studies it, and gains partners to help him bring it down.

As is to be expected, Benford's new novel is not merely a science-fiction hunting story. Although the action, when present, is set at a rocketing pace, it is not the highlighted feature.

One of the things that makes *Against Infinity* a success is the hard science within the text. A full professor of physics, Benford records his knowledge in an entertaining but thorough manner. He tackles the problems of colonization on other worlds stunningly.

With equal deftness, however, Benford also juggles the dozens of political theories human beings would most likely take with them to the stars. In one scene, a new character appears, explains why capitalism must generate communism and why its ascendancy must generate capitalism, and then leaves without being seen again. Benford's style works in such a way that the reader neither misses this character nor questions his entrance.

Against Infinity is top-notch hard-core science fiction. Having the necessary hardware, the science in the novel appears practical, fitting and intelligently constructed. The politics and humanity of the characters are drawn from attitudes and emotions all of us have experienced.



Despite the harsh, gritty realities which Benford paints so well, the novel never loses its sense of wonder. Seen through the eyes of Manuel, both as a child and as a man, the reader sees how a spark of an idea can drive a person throughout his lifetime, until either he conquers it or it conquers him.

This is a rare treat for old-time science-fiction fans who enjoy the appearance of innovative ideas into the field. Asimov, Heinlein and Clarke may be doing their curtain calls, but as long as Benford and others of his caliber are in the wings, hard-core audiences will continue to experience excellent performances.

REPRINTS AND COLLECTIONS

In past months, several science-fiction and fantasy works have been reprinted or reissued. The titles of those works are categorized below according to publishing company; publishing firms are listed in alphabetical order.

Ace Books: *Castledown*, Joyce Ballou Gregorian, \$2.95; *Uller Uprising*, H. Beam Piper, \$2.75.

Avon Books: *Welcome to Mars*, James Blish, \$2.50.

DAW Books: *To Keep the Ship*, A. Bertram Chandler, \$2.50; *Cemetery World*, Clifford D. Simak, \$2.50; *The Blue World*, Jack Vance, \$2.25.

Del Rey Books: *Hiero's Journey*, Sterling E. Lanier, \$2.95.

Dodd, Mead & Co.: *Nebula Maker & Four Encounters*, Olaf Stapledon, Illustrated by Jim Starlin, \$7.95.

Fawcett-Crest: *Starships*, Asimov, Greenberg, and Waugh, Editors, \$3.50.

Pocket Books: *The Monster of Prophecy*, Clark Ashton Smith, \$2.95.

Warner Books: *Dark Crusade/Death Angel's Shadow*, Karl Edward Wagner, \$2.95 (each).

Khi to Freedom: Key to Triteness

KHI TO FREEDOM

Ardath Mayhar

ACE Books 0-441-43726-5 \$2.50

If a hodgepodge of odd-looking and acting aliens and a desire to save the universe are one's mode of entertainment, then this science-fiction novel should supply hours of enjoyment.

In terms of aliens, the reader is inundated with all sorts. Not only is one treated with the usual humdrum of cat-people, spider-folk, and green-furred humanoids, but encounters with such esoteric creatures as interdimensional beings provide added pleasure. However, the cast of thousands, from protagonist to extras, is quite stock. For example, there are the evil fascist types called Ginli, the organized bureaucrats known as the Sdnnn, and the bodiless thinkers named Oti. Apparently, Mayhar wasn't satisfied with her compendium of space lifeforms, so she tossed in a humanoid protagonist determined to save the universe, a trio of lovely interdimensional instructors, and a glimpse of the supreme beings ultimately responsible for the universe's creation and salvation.

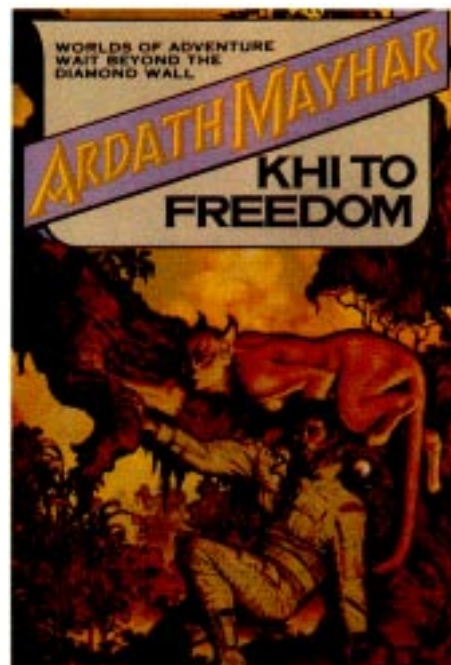
Not only do the physiologies and the ideologies of the aliens races appear trite, but so do the alien names. Even the most

facile-tongued linguist would find the pronunciation of such names as L'K'K'T, Shhhp, Lthhh, or Hrrrl to be nightmarish. Just as aliens need not be named John or Jane Doe, so a string of consonant slurs, sibilants or plosives impossible to pronounce need not reflect the alien element. Character names ought to be easily identifiable and memorable, but *not* distracting.

Besides a plethora of alien lifeforms, *Khi to Freedom* offers the reader an experience to save the universe — or at least large parts of it — not only once, but twice. The novel, then, becomes quite a treat for those with a messianic complex.

During the first half of the novel, Hale Enbo, protagonist and indentured planetary scout, escapes from the lab-ship of his masters, the Ginli. Bound to prove the racial and intellectual supremacy of primates, the Ginli pursue their plan by exploring alien worlds and vivisectioning their captors, be they intelligent or not. Said atrocities, of course, infuriate and horrify Enbo, and he flees to the planet of Khi-Ash. Here amongst the various races, Enbo meets the Khi, the interdimensional beings who teach him how to deal with the Ginli threat.

Since the philosophical ramifications



of racial supremacy didn't supply Mayhar with enough material from which to create a novel, in the middle of the story, the reader encounters the second plotline: threat of universal annihilation. During the last pages of the novel, Enbo must

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protect the universe from a negative life force — whatever this force is remains a mystery, for the reader is never quite sure what constitutes this being.

Though the characters are stock and the plot trite, the author does use a rather interesting literary device. The entire story is told in the first-person viewpoint. Though this, in and of itself, is not new,

that there are various *I*'s telling the story is. Each chapter identifies the first-person speaker. Such a technique allows the reader to explore the feelings, reactions, and beliefs of the various alien races. Since different characters are allowed an opportunity to respond to the same set of circumstances, the story does have a lot of flashbacks, sometimes preventing the

story from moving along expeditiously. But for character development and insight, the technique is fascinating.

All in all, *Khi to Freedom* is that type of science-fiction novel that has too many fictional devices and not enough scientific speculation to make it a memorable piece for its genre.

— review by Patrick Lucien Price

STORM SEASON

Robert Lynn Asprin, editor
Ace 0-441-78710-X \$2.95

As the fourth book of *Thieves' World*, this latest collection of original stories concerns the inhabitants of that wretched backwater called Sanctuary.

For those who have not encountered them, the *Thieves' World* books consist of original stories which are set in a common background: a declining trade town in a conquered province. Though the Emperor's younger brother and a handful of vicious Imperial troops rule the town, some of the most colorful rogues, scoundrels, vagabonds, and ordinary citizens this side of a World Science Fiction Convention inhabit Sanctuary.

These characters were created, and are being chronicled, by some of the most stellar names in the science-fiction and fantasy genres: Poul Anderson, Marion Zimmer Bradley, John Brunner, C.J. Cherryh, Phil Farmer, Joe Haldeman, Vonda McIntyre, and A. E. VanVogt. All authors write under the redaction of Mr. Asprin, also an SF writer. This peculiar experiment — a coordinated equivalent to the creation of such cycles as those about Arthur and Charlemagne — has been received with plaudits and, more importantly, with brisk sales.

What, then, of the fourth book of *Thieves' World*? Curiously enough, it is a bit of a letdown. For the first time, no new writers, and only a handful of new characters, are introduced to the collective unconscious of Sanctuary in this volume. In a curious parallel to the cover paintings, fewer characters are the focal point of the artwork; those few which have remained so are overdrawn to the point of near obsession. As the inhabitants will willingly admit, Sanctuary is slowly becoming an increasingly miasmatic and squalid place, reminiscent of back-alley Lankhmar at its worst.

Storm Season is certainly not lacking in action: slaughter, feud, betrayal, invasion, kidnapping, condemnation, theft, god-slaying, and all the other forms of liveliness that make Sanctuary such a fascinating place to read about safely at home, but such a hellhole for the visitors and inhabitants. Like the preceding volumes, there are enough ideas in here to keep some DMs' campaigns going for five years.

The events in *Storm Season* indicate that the next book promises to be lively

indeed; but the buyer of this one should seek light-hearted fantasy elsewhere.

YEARWOOD

Paul Hazel
Timescape/Pocket
Books 0-671-41605-7 \$2.50

Quoting from the book's cover, this is "the first book of the Finnbranch, which is called *Yearwood*." Ho-hum, another fantasy series by an unknown author. Yet, with a vision all its own, this book has impressed me more than any I have encountered in some years.

Yearwood is a saga drawing from the darker elements of both Celtic and Scandinavian legendry. The tale concerns an ill-begotten youth who, knowing neither his own true name nor his heritage, feels drawn to leave home. The story reminds one, not of some hackneyed cardboard Conan, but of Cuchulain, Aragorn, Odin, and Oedipus. In Hazel's novel, familiar literary motifs become, not clichés, but archetypes which resonate in the depths of the subconscious mind.

The work is not without flaw, however. The author does not have the gift of creating names as did Tolkien — a name such as Tabak ap Ewyn would cause any philologist to balk.

A more serious flaw, though, is Hazel's depiction of women. His description is neither the mindless good-ol'-boy chauvinism of a Robert E. Howard nor the twisted sadism of a John Norman. Instead, women do not appear as the individuals they actually are. Their personal qualities are overshadowed by their representations as the greatest of archetypes. Thus, female characters tend to lose their element of humanity.

Regardless of flaws, I join the writers quoted in the book's blurb in looking forward to the next book — to be called *Underssea* — and in recommending it to the serious reader of fantasy literature of mythic quality.

FORBIDDEN SANCTUARY

Richard Bowker
Del Rey/Ballantine 0-345-29871-3 \$2.50

More than any other religious sect, the Catholic Church has been a source of fascination for science-fiction writers. Perhaps this interest has occurred because such writers often come from a Catholic working-class background, or because the

Roman Church claims universality and perpetuity. Whatever the reason may be, many SF works — *A Canticle for Leibowitz*, the *Deryni* series, "The Star", for example — have dealt not only with the Christian religion but also the Catholic sect. *Forbidden Sanctuary* is one more example of this topical concern.

Aboard an alien ship destined to make first contact with Earth, a crewmember of a heretical sect plans his escape from the ship once it lands. The crewmember remembers that this sect's teacher, raised amongst a rebellious folk, was a wonder-working preacher of love and peace. After the teacher was brutally persecuted and condemned by his coreligionists, he rose from the dead so that he could inspire his followers to believe in his teachings. This once obscure sect is now persecuted by the Empire on behalf of its own decadent and coarsened official cult, but countless Imperial citizens are becoming secret believers. It is this persecution that has prompted the alien to seek his freedom.

This set of circumstances should sufficiently indicate that something special is afoot here. If not, the human interpreter chosen for the encounter with the alien race will. As an extremely devout Catholic, the human interpreter is able to immediately grasp the theological implications of the situation. When the alien escapes from his persecutors, he seeks sanctuary within the Church. But the ensuing complications embroil the Pope, the Secretary-General of the UN, the President of the United States, and eventually every inhabitant of the Earth, human and alien alike.

This book is thought-provoking and well-written, involving very credible human and alien characters as well as an objective consideration of various ethical and political issues. It is also *fun* to read. While the Numoi are not as alien as some readers might desire, the personalities, culture, and conflicts of the Numoi are presented in a plausible manner.

Like Walter Wangerin's *Book of the Dun Cow*, Bowker's novel may be one of those books which is less meaningful to the non-Christian reader. However, if skeptics exercise the willing suspension of disbelief, they will find this work very much worth their while. As for the Christian reader, one will enjoy reading *Forbidden Sanctuary* and sharing it with a friend.

— reviews by Mike Lowrey

Expanding the genre of RPGs

GANGBUSTERS™ game recreates the roaring 20's

The GANGBUSTERS™ game is TSR's entry into the role-playing environment centered around the bootlegging and racketeering days of the 1920's and 1930's. Among the forces of Law are Melvin Purves of the young FBI and Eliot Ness and the Untouchables; among the forces of Crime are Al Capone and John Dillinger. The setting is the mean streets, the speakeasies, and the betting parlors of a seamy and corrupt urban society; the action involves machine guns, fast cars, and easy violence. The characters are tough-talking and hard-bitten. Shrewd and fearless leaders head up ethnic gangs of gunmen, thugs, and connen pursuing "the American dream" of quick financial success against the grim backdrop of a crushing depression. Against these lawless entrepreneurs are arrayed the heroes of decent society — beat cops, special agents, private detectives, crime reporters, and the honest citizen.

These are the dramatic materials of a cleverly designed and well-written role-playing game. The package costs \$12, and contains a 64-page rule book, a 16-page solitaire module, a 22" by 35", two-sided, full-color map of several city blocks (with detailed floor plans of building interiors), an 11" by 17", two-sided color ward map of a city similar to Chicago, a set of die-cut cardboard counters, and two lo-sided dice. The product quality is excellent; the artwork and layout is appealing and professionally executed.

The rule book covers the basic game mechanics in about 16 pages; the rest of the rule book is devoted to the development of a *Gangbusters* campaign. The basic rules are relatively simple and easily learned; the text is well-organized and clearly written, using simple, everyday language with a minimum of gaming jargon. Best of all, the rules are amply illustrated by frequent short examples of rules applications and several extended samples of the flow of play, demonstrating the application of rules in the context of an adventure. These extended examples are very effective in suggesting the color and atmosphere a gamesmaster should strive for in his adventure.

The rules themselves are streamlined and lack the painstaking detail of *Daredevils* by Fantasy Games Unlimited, another RPG set in the same time period. For example, *Daredevils* lists 40 different specific models of firearms, while the *Gangbusters* rule set lists only 10 general types of weapons. The emphasis is on dramatic function rather than simulation-quality detail. Most of the rules use familiar established conventions

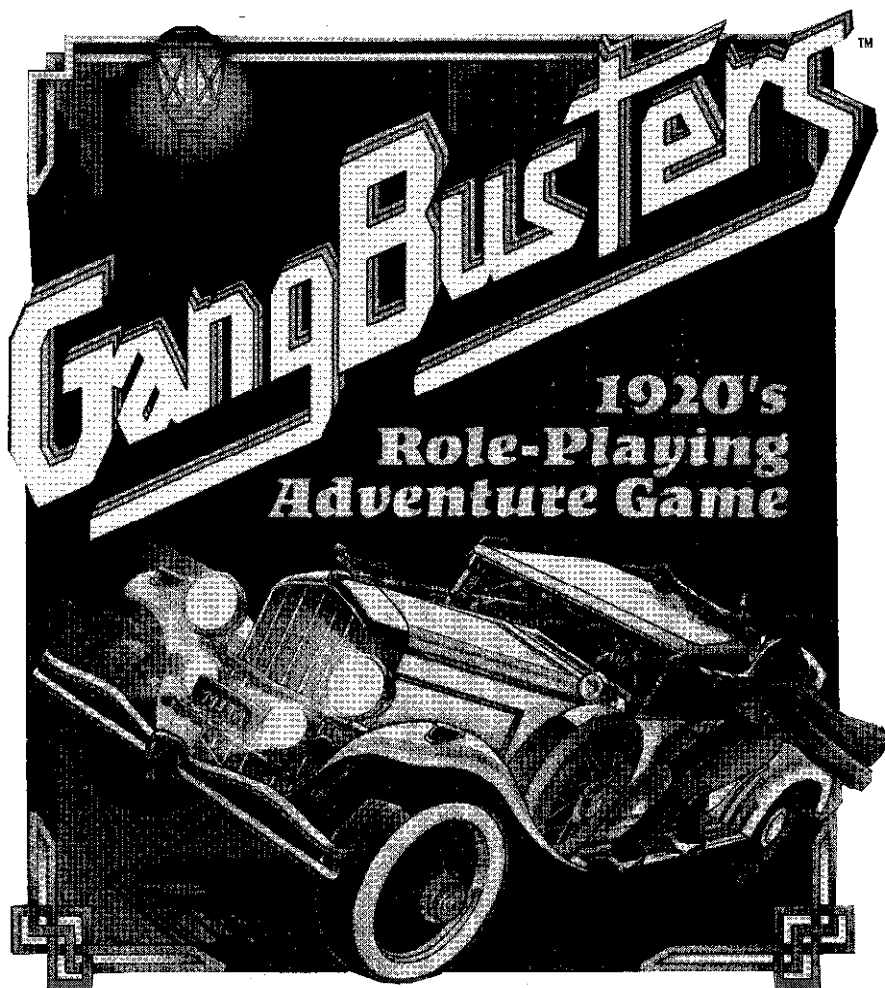
of role-playing games: character stats, hit points, percentile skills, ability checks, action options, sequenced movement, and so forth. A few of the ideas are original and attractive; in particular, I like the separation of damage points into bruising and wounding damage, permitting a kind of subdual attack, and the good fist-fighting rules. Hand-to-hand combat has not been handled well in most RPGs; the *Gangbusters* system may be an exception, offering the feeling of a real fistfight without the detailed rules which slow the rapid pace of action necessary for a movie-style free-for-all.

I also like the use of a luck roll in potentially fatal situations; essentially, this is just a saving roll, but it comes only at the most appropriate point in a role-playing game — when a character is about to die. Most other RPGs give saving rolls against all kinds of misfortunes, emphasizing the role of dumb luck in success. In the *Gangbusters* rules, this dumb-luck provision comes at the point of a player character's life or death; no one likes to lose a player character, and I

think this last chance for a bit of luck is dramatically and emotionally satisfactory.

The game also has a character attribute called Presence which is most similar to charisma in other systems; here, however, Presence is cleverly used to judge physical and verbal persuasion attempts. One most appealing feature of this system is that an underling often uses the Presence score of his superior to resist persuasion, coercion, or torture, reflecting the underling's fear of and/or loyalty to his boss. Most other systems have a form of charisma attribute, but don't really seem to have any real use for it.

The sections that cover the development of a *Gangbusters* campaign are most appealing. There are additional details of character development, including an advancement and skills section. Most entertaining is the section on player-character careers. There are four basic careers: law enforcement, private investigation, newspaper reporting, and crime. In law enforcement there are three primary options: local police departments, Prohibition agents, and FBI



agents. The powers exercised by these roles and the restrictions they must abide by are based in history; they conjure a convincing illusion of realism for the dedicated role-player.

The most interesting sections are those on establishing criminal ventures like numbers games and bootlegging rackets. The energy and enterprise of the criminal has always fascinated the American imagination. After all, most criminals are seeking the same traditional American goals — wealth, business success, expansion, status, competition — that the law-abiding businessman seeks; the criminal simply uses illegal means. The intricacies of illegal businesses require a keen mind and an adventuresome spirit; to be a successful criminal requires a great deal of talent. Perhaps this is one of the strongest appeals of this game — an opportunity to role-play a criminal. When one reflects on the great film heroes of the gangster genre, one is struck by the preponderance of criminals as heroes; good guys just aren't as aggressive and colorful.

There are sections on dealing with NPCs, the role of public opinion in the campaign, and on the workings of the criminal justice system. The section on NPCs handles loyalty, persuasion, bribery, witnesses to crime, cronies, and politicians. The historical statements made by this game on the dishonesty and corruptibility of many law-enforcement officers

and politicians are pragmatic and realistic; to have suggested otherwise would have been to undermine the credibility of the game. I like the rules on public opinion; any time a player character engages in crimes of senseless violence and rapacity, the churches, newspapers, and citizenry make enraged demands on the politicians to clean up the city; when the "heat is on," the rules say that it's "even possible that gangsters will help local police solve certain crimes just to get the heat turned off." The section on the law — hearings, bail, plea bargaining, trials, jury tampering, sentencing, and parole — place the criminal's career in perspective; any player-character criminal who is careless will not be on the streets for long. On the other hand, there exists the repugnant but fascinating possibility of foiling justice with the proper expenditure of wealth and cleverness.

The section in the rules on gamemastering a *Gangbusters* adventure is full of useful suggestions and common-sense wisdom, but I wish more detailed help in running a campaign had been offered. Most particularly missed is a bibliography of fictional and historical readings in the period to aid the GM in campaign-building. The most effective remedy for this fault is the production of modules that illustrate the art of campaign design and offer detailed support for the creation of a city-based campaign,

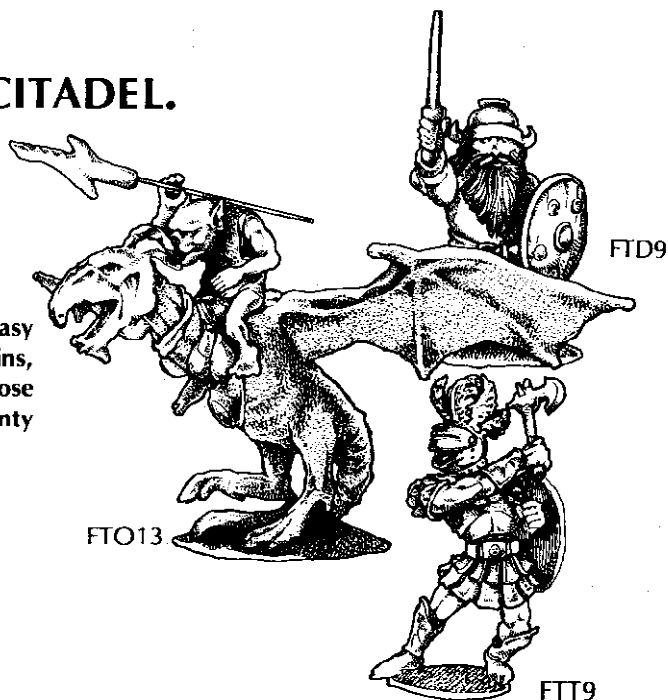
complete with established crime rackets, crooked politicians, and crusading cops. At least the one module I've seen satisfies this need; more about the module, "Murder in Harmony," later in this review.

The rule book concludes with optional expert rules for guns, fistfights, and cars, and an appendix with typical NPC stats, a representative selection of common expenses and wages from the period, and a "rogues gallery" giving the stats of famous historical criminals and lawmen. The prospect of playing in a campaign where you might meet Bugsy Siegel or Vito Genovese is quite attractive; why is it that the good guys just don't seem to produce characters as colorful as the bad guys? The rule book also has an index, a player-character record sheet, and a reprinting of the most important rules charts on the back cover.

I was most excited when I discovered that a solo module had been included with the rules; I believe that the best way to learn a rules system is through a programmed adventure. However, this one falls a little short of my expectations; it lacks nothing in action or narrative imagination, but offers little commentary to explain and reinforce the understanding of the game mechanics. It does adequately illustrate an adventure module; however, I was also hoping for its more effective employment as a teaching tool, as an

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extension of the use of examples in the rules book.

In fact, I sometimes found the module's choice of emphasis and phrasing confusing when trying to understand how the basic rules were being applied in certain situations. For example, at one point the module emphasizes that the figure in the rear seat of an escaping car receives a defensive modifier for being under cover; no mention is made of the status of the driver of the car, who is ideally a more important target, since hitting him might cause the car to crash. The basic rules clearly state that a target in a car receives defensive modifiers for being in cover; I spent a great deal of time looking for some rule which might account for the module's seemingly significant omission of a description of the driver as "under cover." Further, when the characters are first attacked, they are machine-gunned as they sit in a car. The module, however, qualifies their defensive modifier as "partial cover." I never quite resolved my confusion over this application of the rules.

Additionally, it is particularly frustrating to try to follow the multiple paths of the flowchart of decisions and consequences; it would be better if a player could easily go back and see what the results would have been if he had selected another alternative. The action, however, is fast and furious, and gives players an opportunity to find out how well they

understand the rules. There is also a very useful chart for recording the sequence of choices and actions; such a chart, with additional refinements, should be included as a part of all programmed adventures.

The maps in the game are very good-looking and useful. The worst part of a city-based campaign is preparing all the floor plans of the establishments a PC might decide to visit; the map will provide enough material for many adventures. The grid reference system is convenient for GM reference in future published or home-made adventures. The counters provided with the game are necessary but unremarkable; the use of miniatures would, I'm sure, add to the atmosphere and flavor of a session.

In a role-playing game like this, where there is such an emphasis on the campaign aspect of play, I felt it would be appropriate to take a look at a module that TSR has published for the system. I was very pleased with GB2, "Murder in Harmony," a murder mystery that unfolds to reveal a backdrop of labor racketeering and the challenge of a younger Italian syndicate for the profitable criminal operations currently controlled by an old-fashioned, brutal Irish mob. The adventure is well-written; it contains an effective main plot with a series of minor subplots, convoluted but well-motivated and credible. It contains strongly differentiated and colorful characters.

The materials are well-organized for reading and reference. First there is a brief summary of the main plot and subplots. Next, a chronology of major events and episodes, then the description of the action; each encounter is described, explaining the motivations and behaviors of the participating NPCs. In a separate section, the materials of evidence are divided into three major types — statements of the NPCs, physical evidence, and results of wiretaps. Finally there are general descriptions of the appearance, personality, and motivations of each of the major NPCs. This adventure is designed for investigation, problem-solving, and role-playing, not just bad-guy butchery or treasure hunts. Mark Acres, who designed the *Gangbusters* system, is also the author of this module, and in it he extends his conception of the game as a campaign; the quality of the module is an excellent recommendation for the quality of the game.

There are some reservations I must express about the game. First, I believe that designing and running a campaign would entail a great deal of research and preparation for the GM. The lack of a list of references for further reading only complicates this problem. It is hard to tell without seeing a number of *Gangbusters* campaigns in action, but I suspect that it would be difficult to run a campaign without some detailed knowledge of the

period, unlike running a fantasy campaign, where a GM can make up the details of his campaign background as he goes along.

Second, the design of the game does not exactly fit the model of the "party adventure" established by the original RPGs — fantasy role-playing systems like the D&D® game. In the *Gangbusters* game, many of the situations do not lend themselves to established groups of PCs working together; the traditional private eye, for example, is a loner, and it is unlikely that a crime reporter would travel everywhere with a group of FBI agents. This may cause inconvenient lulls in activity for certain characters. It is possible to establish criminal gangs with inseparable comrades, or a group of lawmen like the Untouchables, but even in the module "Murder in Harmony" it is evident that not all PCs can be involved in every episode.

Finally, there is a dearth of popular literature and media concerning gangsters at the moment. There are not as many ready models for characters and narratives as there are for science-fiction and fantasy games. This may imply an inadequate market of readers and gamers seeking this kind of adventure; perhaps this is simply not a stimulating enough fantasy for an escapist age like ours. The grim realism of the *Gangbusters* theme may be its most unattractive feature to gamers who seem to be looking for magical powers, heroic adventures, and fairy-tale moralities where it is easy to tell the difference between good and evil, and good always triumphs in the end.

Nonetheless, it is this realistic flavor that is the greatest virtue of the game. The history of the Volstead Act, law and corruption in the big cities, and the criminal robber barons makes interesting reading. The *Gangbusters* game is also a model of a well-written and well-designed FRP system. I hope it is an indication of TSR's increasingly high standards for its products; it is easily the most well-written work published by TSR that I've seen. The rules contain an ideal preponderance of campaign rules over game mechanics; the rules are provided primarily for dramatic purposes, not for a simulation of the period. The perceived value — the graphics and overall appearance of the package — is very good for only \$12. There is plenty of action — guns, fist-fights, and car chases.

The potential of the gangster genre for role-playing is very strong, though at the moment the genre is at an ebb in popular literature. It has all the important features — colorful characters, fast action, episodic narratives, a distinctive, stimulating setting. The *Gangbusters* system uses these elements effectively, and is a worthwhile purchase both as an example of a well-written game system and as a new setting for role-playing.

— Reviewed by Ken Rolston

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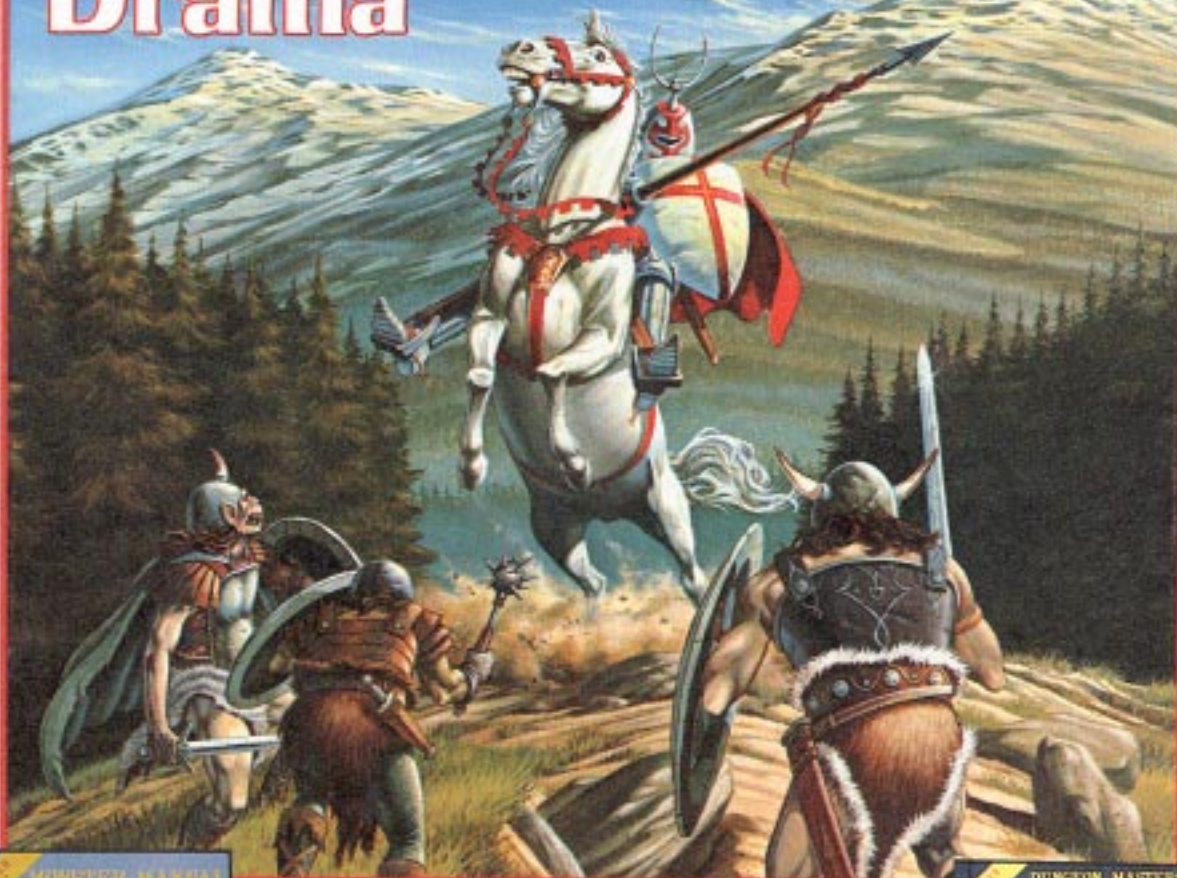
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Borderlands is worth the price

Eon Products has put out some interesting games over the past few years. Some of their efforts have been near misses, such as *Darkover*, while *Cosmic Encounter* is an unqualified classic in the realm of SF games. The people at Eon — Jack Kittredge, Peter Olotka, and Bill Eberle — are also responsible for *Dune* (produced under the Avalon Hill label), a game that tackles the very difficult task of bringing Frank Herbert's novels to life. One thing is certainly clear: the Eon staff has continually produced challenging, original, and playable games.

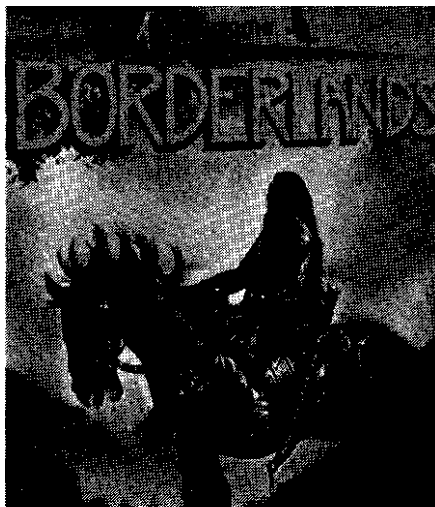
BORDERLANDS, the subject of this review, is no exception. Once more with this product, Eon has combined an interesting premise with absorbing mechanics.

Borderlands is the closest thing to a standard wargame to appear from this company. It has a map and military units, and production plays a key role in the game; the players vie for control of geographic regions and supplies of resources. The game seems to borrow some of the best features of other games like *Diplomacy* and *Civilization*, while retaining its own distinct identity.

The game is played on a 20" by 24" glossy map of an unnamed mythical continent. (Although *Borderlands* is billed as the game of the "barbaric future," there is nothing to indicate that it is set in some sort of post-apocalyptic milieu.) The map is divided into 36 irregularly shaped territories, marked off by land and river boundaries. The number of territories that border a given region varies, imparting to certain areas key strategic importance. Each territory is named and contains a small box printed on the map for holding military units.

Of considerable importance are the 16 discs representing resource production sites. There are three each of coal, iron, gold, and horse breeding grounds, and four forests. These counters are distributed randomly around the territories before the game begins, insuring that each game will be different from previous ones. A number of very tiny tokens are provided to denote units of these commodities, and are used for building and trading.

Each player has a set of 20 "warrior" or army counters, used to show who owns a given territory (as in *Risk*, each territory is possessed by one player or another at all times) and to provide minimal military potential for attack and defense. Other counters include horses, gained by control of breeding regions or through trade; and cities, weapons, and river boats, which are constructed from combinations of resource tokens. All these pieces have military power, and horses and river boats provide mobility for an attack.



Different sets of warrior counters are provided for each of four players; all other counters are universal, their ownership denoted by the warrior counter with which they are located.

Borderlands is a game of simple mechanics, but with subtle and complex strategy. The game minimizes luck (and spreads the effects of good fortune around to all the players) and maximizes the ability to put-together complex patterns of attack, interweaving zones of defense, and persuasive negotiations into an overall effective strategic plan. It's a game that places a premium on conceptualization and efficient exploitation of resources and elements of power.

The game begins with the placement of resource sites, as described above, followed by the distribution of player armies. This is a key part of the game; the locations of the resource sites will determine which territories will be of prime economic importance and afford the owners the potential for war, while the placement of armies will determine both the initial control of resources and the player's power base. If a player's forces are spread too thin and he doesn't have a mutually supporting position with a decent prospect for expansion, he is likely to be eliminated. A frequent opponent of mine, whom I regard as probably the best *Borderlands* player I've ever been up against, feels that the set-up is the most important part of the game.

Once the game is set up, players start taking turns (or cycles, as they are called). Nominally, there are five phases in a cycle, with all players completing action in a phase before moving on to the next. I use the qualifier "nominally" because some phases are dependent on a die roll to determine whether they occur. The phases in a cycle are development, production, trade, shipment, and attack. Only the first and last automatically occur in each cycle; for the others, a die

roll of 1-4 indicates that the phase occurs, a 5 means it does not, and on a 6, the players vote on whether it takes place!

Of the five phases, four are directly related to economics. In the development phase, combinations of resources are converted into boats, cities, and weapons. The exact combination of resources needed varies with the item being produced: One coal unit and one iron unit, or two gold units, make a weapon; four golds or one each of gold, timber, coal, and iron will build a city; timber is needed for river boats. Gold is the key element; two units can make a weapon and four will build a city, making access to a gold site very important. In the production phase, resource counters are produced at the appropriate sites, one unit per site — unless the site is on or adjacent to a city, in which case production is doubled.

In the trade phase, the players do just that: exchange commodities with an eye toward the construction of desired items on the next turn. Trade is a free-wheeling affair, with no limitations except that players must have a common border to make an exchange. Thus, a simple market economy develops, depending on an individual player's needs and his access to materials. For example, a player who wishes to develop a city needs gold; if he doesn't have a gold token, he may be willing to trade several of his less useful or more plentiful resources, say a horse and an iron token, or three timbers, for a single gold token. In a four-player game, trade is especially important since there are only three sites for gold, iron, coal, and horses, insuring that at least one player will always be lacking in at least one of those resources. Control of two or three resource sites by a single player, or a pair of players acting in tandem, is extremely useful, allowing the controller(s) to cut off another player from a given commodity, or exact a high price for it. Trade is one of the most fun and interactive sections of the game.

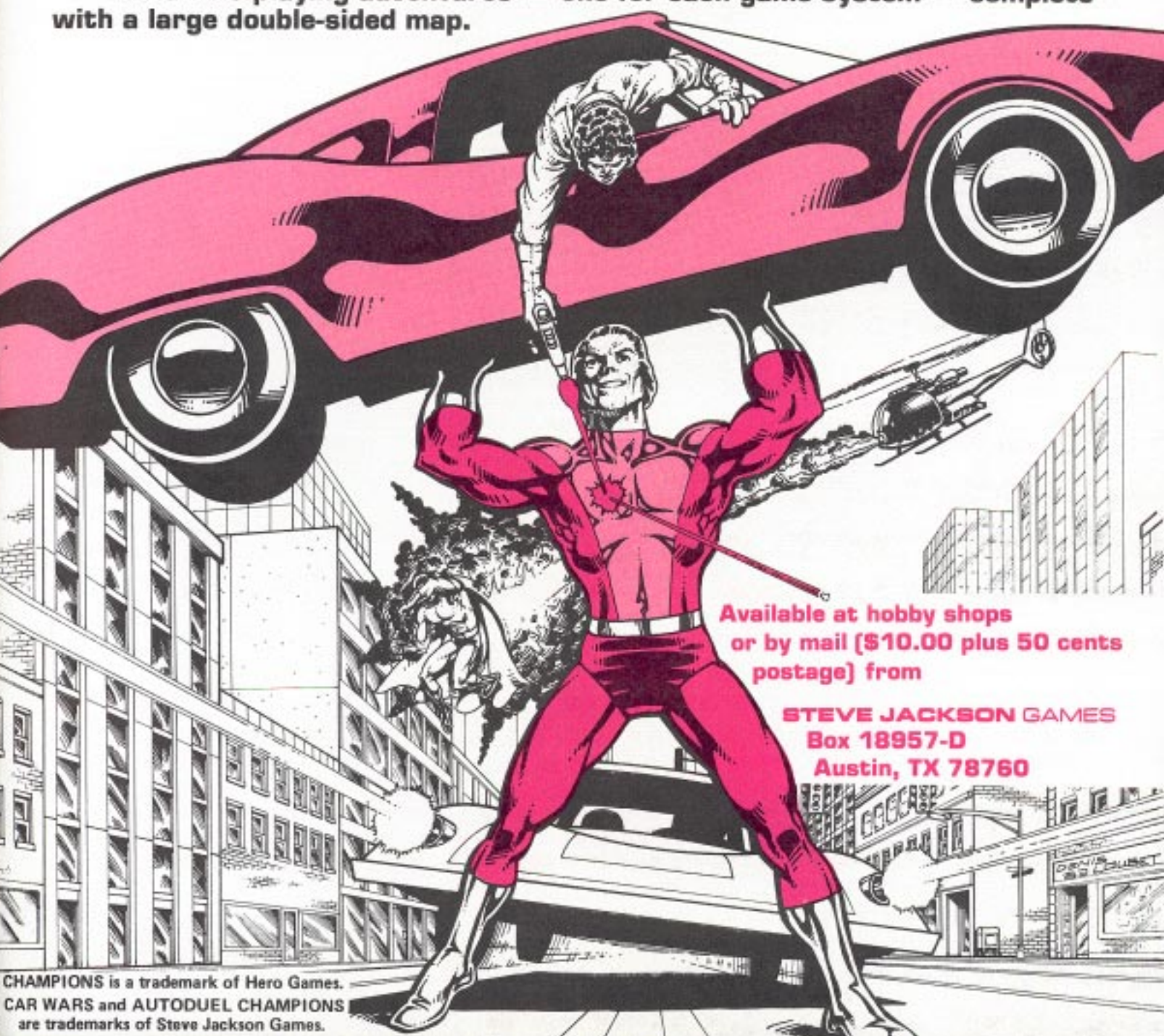
Following the trade phase is shipment. The required resource tokens must be in the same territory to be developed into a city, boat, or weapon, and achieving this requires shifting resource tokens around. This can be done in the trade phase, since tokens acquired by trade may be placed in any owned territory (making the trade of like tokens viable and mutually beneficial). In the shipment phase, players move counters by more conventional means, territory by territory. Boats and horses are especially useful here, since they greatly increase the distance over which counters can be moved.

All of this jockeying brings players to the attack phase, where the power that

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was accumulated via production and development is brought to bear on the opposition. The method of resolving combat is elegantly simple, challengingly subtle, and, for those who like to make their plans without fear of what the vagaries of the die roll will bring, entirely devoid of luck or random elements. Every non-resource counter has a point value: 1 for armies and horses, 2 for river boats, 3 for weapons and cities. A territory (or river boat, which act as a separate territory for combat purposes) may have no more than one of each type of non-resource counter, and the total strength of a territory is the sum of its counters. In addition, for both attack and defense, the point values of adjacent owned territories (and those of any player who can be convinced or coerced into helping) may support the attack, as long as they border on the territory attacked. A comparison of the point totals is made, with the stronger side prevailing. After a successful attack, the attacker replaces the opposing warrior counter with one of his own color and assumes control of all resource tokens and universal counters in the conquered territory; no units are ever destroyed. The attack rules favor the attacker. He receives an additional point for the warrior he will place to occupy the territory, and he may make a special pre-attack shipment, allowing him to bring up forces from the rear if he has a chain of horses or a boat. Because of these advantages, and the benefits of a successful attack, such as a free shipment or a possible follow-up attack, the game favors the player who can attack frequently. Attacks are also good for seizing resource areas, adjusting borders for a more defensible line or position to project power, or keeping the opposition off balance.

The rules for the attack phase may seem simple (and they are, in a mechanical sense), but some thought and planning is required to execute an attack properly. Success will go to the player who sees all opportunities for both attack and defense, who places his key units (especially cities and weapons) in optimal positions for attack and defense. A good

defensive position will include interlocking, mutually supporting territories, while attack combinations will seek to concentrate power at the point of attack. Despite the lack of a random element in the resolution of combat, the many possibilities (especially those allowed by the pre-attack shipment rule) force players to plan ahead and try to avoid overlooking any crucial elements.

Victory goes to the first player, or coalition of players, to hold three cities at the end of a turn. This, of course, puts a premium on the construction of cities, the most difficult item to build. Although they can't move, cities are of considerable value economically and militarily, so they're nice to have around in any case. The victory conditions seem both fair and realistic; the player who wins is the player who has become the "most civilized," not necessarily the one who has achieved the most battlefield victories. My only complaint with the victory conditions are those involving joint wins. It is too easy for a player tied with another at two cities apiece to turn to a third player having one city and suggest that they combine for a joint win. I would offer either forbidding joint wins altogether (Eon's suggestion, if you don't like this arrangement), or making a rule that joint wins must entail having one city above the normal requirement per additional player in the win. Thus, a two-player combination would have to have four cities, rather than just three, to win.

As with some of its other titles, Eon has taken the position that more of a good thing is better, and has offered an expansion kit for *Borderlands*. It includes army/warrior pieces for a fifth player, additional resource sites, three islands, and bridges and ocean-going ships as new pieces. The islands are placed off the shore of the continent (the rules are a bit fuzzy on island placement, but players should have no trouble working out something mutually agreeable) and provide some added space to accommodate the extra player. (I suggest using none of the islands, or at most just one of them, in a game with less than five players.)

Bridges and ocean-going ships are developed in the same manner as cities and the like. Both are means of getting from the mainland to the islands and vice versa, and the ship is a very powerful military instrument against coastal areas. The expansion kit is all right, but I think its main virtue is the extra set of counters for the fifth man. The islands are the only logical way to expand the playing area, but in the games I've played, they quickly became dominated by one player per island. Bridges and ships take a while to develop, and until that time, islands are "closed systems" that cannot be reinforced; the player with the most tokens on a given island is often able to parlay his superiority into control within a few turns. The ocean-going ships are very strong, perhaps too strong. The first player to develop one can terrorize coastal areas (about half the territories on the main continent and all areas on islands) with relative ease; I haven't played enough games with ships to be sure they are a game-balance problem, but I suspect they might be. On the whole, I would recommend the expansion kit (priced at \$5) only for the group that needs the counter set for a fifth player.

Borderlands is a very good game. Its combination of simple rules, engrossing strategy, and attractive graphics make it a sure winner. Its simplicity and short playing time (a game can be finished in about two hours) make it a fine choice for an evening's play. My recommendation of the game would be unqualified were it not for its high (\$20) price tag. I can't help feeling the game is overpriced by \$5 to \$8; the basic set of *Cosmic Encounter*, by comparison, contains more and fancier components and sells for \$15. Still, if one measures value by how often a game is played and how much it is enjoyed, then *Borderlands* is a good buy. This is one game that won't sit on the shelf.

Borderlands can be found in many game stores or can be ordered by direct mail from Eon Products, RFD 2, Sheldon Road, Barre MA 01005 (add \$2.00 for shipping on mail orders).

— Reviewed by Tony Watson

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Research shows in *Cities* book

The *CITIES* book, published by Midkemia Press, is a 72-page fantasy role-playing game aid that fills the basic needs of anyone who uses villages, town, or cities in his campaign. For \$7.95, this second-edition work is an excellent value, providing complete guides for the design of communities and urban areas, great and small, and a systematic listing of both typical and unusual encounters and episodes that might occur in a city or town that is the site of an adventure or a part of a fantasy role-playing campaign.

Designed for use with any game system, the product is well organized and contains explicit procedures that make it easy to use. Detailed charts and systems, based on careful research of historical towns and their economics, provide a solid foundation for a credible urban adventure setting — a critical component in superior FRP gaming and a factor inadequately addressed by many existing city game aids.

The first section of the book is a comprehensive encounter table divided into 28 classes of occurrences — for example, encounters with the town watch, an aristocrat, pilgrims, a slave coffle, or a circus. The probability of a specific occurrence

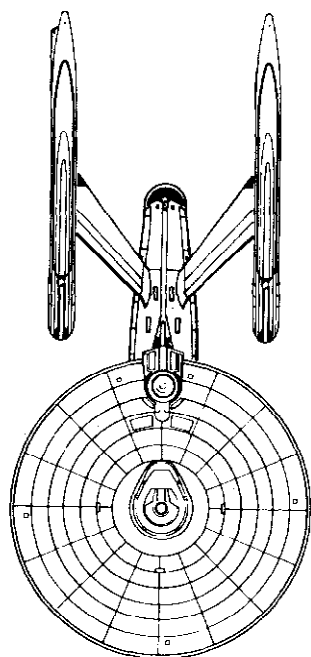
varies with the time of day and the economic status (poor quarter, wealthy quarter, merchant quarter) of the area. After determining the class of encounter, the GM is directed to the appropriate table for that encounter class; under each specific class may be found a series of events that might befall a character in a town setting.

It matters little whether the GM uses dice rolls to determine the encounter, or whether he uses the tables as a menu of encounter ideas; the solid virtue of this section is that it is an organized and comprehensive catalog of the kinds of events that can spark exciting and realistic adventures: "Characters see slaver beating a slave." "Character witnesses a teleport appearing in front of the characters — the teleporter is clutching another person." The book has 20 pages full of ideas for city adventures, neatly and systematically organized for the GM. They can be used in the planning stage of a session, or they can be used in the middle of a session as a spur to improvisation. Each entry on the charts could be the basis of an evening's entertainment.

The book's second section, "Cities, Towns, and Villages: Building Your

Own," is its most remarkable feature. Offered are two systems of procedures and charts: one for creating villages of up to 400 inhabitants, and another for creating larger towns and cities. Using these systems and a set of dice, a GM can determine the businesses and services of a village or town, in a distribution appropriate to the community's population. The authors have digested a great deal of information about historical urban areas and condensed and organized it in tabular form — a considerable achievement and a great help for the GM. All the businesses, institutions, and establishments likely to be found in a medieval city are listed.

Additionally, the system emphasizes the important part played by the open market or bazaar in early towns; charts describe how often these markets are held and what kinds of commodities one might expect to find there. The lists of businesses for larger towns and cities are quite extensive, and divided into three economic classes: those to be found in the wealthy, merchant, and poor quarters of town. Also provided are several special types of urban sections: for example, the shantytown or fisherman's village, the



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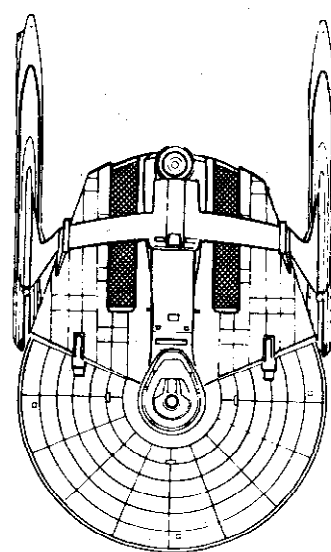
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open market, and the, ahem, seamier side of urban life. I have found these lists very useful in understanding the economics of my campaign. Now I can figure out what a given town produces, and roughly how much money a freeman could expect to earn in a week; this gives me some basis for a logical response when a player takes five hundred gold coins and tries to buy a militia-trained army. "Forget it!" says the indignant native. "I make 15 gold pieces a month in the stable; you think I'm gonna risk my life for a measly 25 gold?"

This section only permits the creation of a list of the appropriate businesses and services in a town of a given size. It must be noted that only general guidelines are given on drawing maps of villages and towns; one or two sample diagrams of each would have been helpful. This system is best used in conjunction with a product like the Judges Guild's *Village I & II* books (which provide unlabeled maps of villages and towns of varied sizes), unless the GM is content to prepare his own maps. The process of designing a small village and labeling the appropriate buildings on a map takes about half an hour; designing a good-sized town will take somewhat more time. However, compared to the effort that must be expended trying to design a town without this game aid, there will be a great savings in time and a considerably superior finished product.

The third section is called the "City Catch-Up Tables," and is designed specifically to account for the time spent by a character in town while he is not actually adventuring. This out-of-play gaming works through a series of random rolls and charts that indicate a person's employment status, savings per week from wages and investments, and weekly costs incurred. There are also tables which indicate whether some significant event has occurred in the out-of-play period: "offered a dangerous mission," "fallen ill," "offended someone," "accused of a crime," "mugged," "offered a marriage proposal." All of these events greatly add to the atmosphere and drama of the player character; he becomes intimately and realistically involved in his economic and social status — he becomes a part of the town where he resides.

The final section of the book is called "Appendices," and is a miscellaneous collection of useful charts and tables covering such topics as: taverns/inns/hotels (quality of accommodations, food, prices, types of patrons), stables (available animals, cost of food and grooming), and occupational backgrounds (carpet maker, herald, forger, torturer, botanist, poet).

The *Cities* book is a tremendous value. The product is truly generic; encounters are not described in terms of any specific FRP game system. (Statistics for NPC encounters will have to be prepared

beforehand or improvised by the GM.) The procedures are systematic and clearly explained; the charts and tables are organized for easy reference. This product is comprehensive; nothing about FRP town gaming (that I can think of) has been omitted. It contains many stimulating ideas to spur a GM's creation and improvisation, and numerous dramatic situations requiring player character to think things through and come up with sensible responses.

I've shown and loaned this book to a number of my friends; each has been impressed with its utility. A typical response from them is chagrin over the fact that the product was not discovered (by them) sooner than it was. In fact, all the Midkemia Press products I've seen have been excellent. The authors of *Cities*, Stephen and April Abrams and Jon Everson, previously prepared the excellent encounter tables in *Thieves' World* (a Chaosium product), a fine example of the quality of their work. They have also produced a number of other FRP aids; their town materials are particularly worthwhile. I recommend that all campaign gamemasters examine Midkemia's products; they will be pleasantly surprised by the lucidity of the presentation and the wealth of information and ideas they will find for town-based FRP gaming.

— Reviewed by Ken Rolston



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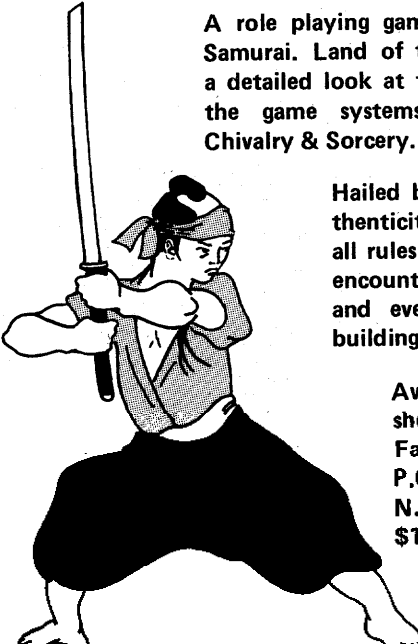
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Cards are the law in *Judge Dredd*

JUDGE DREDD, subtitled "The game of crime-fighting in Mega-City One," is a recent release from Games Workshop Ltd. The game is based on the popular British comic strip of the same name.

The *Judge Dredd* background deals with super-cops, called Judges, who attempt to maintain law and order in futuristic mega-cities. Villains range from the three-headed Rex Peters, to the Doomsday Dogs, to Zit of the Hellfire Club. Weird stuff.

The game box contains a 16" by 22" mounted mapboard (in two pieces), 54 Action Cards, 21 Sector Cards, 28 Perp (for "perpetrator") Cards, 28 Crime Cards, 6 Judge Cards, a 24-page, 6" by 8" card album, a four-page rules sheet, six pawns, and one small six-sided die. (The cards have to be punched out of die-cut sheets.)

The most remarkable thing about the components — and the game as a whole, for that matter — is the marvelous line-art illustrations done by Brian Bollard. All of the characters' portraits and the other illustrative elements are strange, funny, and interesting to examine.

The board, a cluttered depiction of an overcrowded super-city, is divided into 28 sectors. They are mostly large, roughly rectangular shapes, each of which is adjacent to several others. Each of the Action Cards contains two sections, one describing an offensive (attacking) action and the other detailing a defensive action, or some other maneuver designed to mess up your opponents. Sector Cards, provided for 21 of the 28 sectors on the board, are used to determine the location of each crime that occurs. Perp Cards show "who dunnit" and how powerful that perpetrator is (on a scale of 1 to 10). Crime Cards describe the particular crime in question and how tough it is to handle (1 to 6). The six Judge Cards help each player remember what color pawn he has chosen.

The card album has no game function, but is especially useful for players who are unfamiliar with the roster of Dredd people and places. The booklet describes each sector, crime, and perp that can come into play.

The play of the game is simple. Six crimes are always occurring somewhere in the city. A Sector Card is turned face up to determine where a given crime occurs; a Crime Card is placed face up in that sector, and a Perp Card is placed in the same spot face down. The game-turn consists of two "rounds" or phases. First, all players move; then, all players try to make arrests.

Players can move one or two sectors per turn. The object is to move to one of the six Crime sectors and make an arrest,

which scores points for the arresting player. The player with the most points at the end of the game is the winner.

When a player stops in a Crime sector, he can see the Crime (it is face up) but not the Perp. The Perp card is then revealed to all players. The number on the Crime Card and the number on the Perp Card are added to get a total value of 2 to 16. The player starts with a base value of 5; he can add to this by the play of cards and the roll of a die, trying to beat the value of the Crime Card plus the Perp Card plus another die roll.

Where the fun comes in is in the provision that other players can freely play cards to help you, help the Perp, or totally foil your chances of making an arrest. Each player starts the game with six cards in his hand, and in most cases receives one new card per turn.

When a player makes an arrest, he takes the Perp Card and the Crime Card off the board and places them in front of him for scoring purposes. A new Sector Card is then turned over to reveal the next place where a crime has occurred, and the process is begun anew. Thus, there are always six crimes to be solved.

If a player tries to make an arrest and

fails, his pawn goes to the Intensive Care Area within the Justice Dept. Hospital sector. He loses his next turn, and the Crime and Perp Cards remain in their place on the board.

Clearly, the cards (of all types) are the focal points of the game. The contest becomes a battle for resources (your new cards) and high die rolls. The game ends on the turn after the last of the 28 Perp Cards is placed on the board.

Judge Dredd takes a couple of hours to play, and can be quite a frustrating exercise. It's all in the cards. It is often possible to stop a player who appears on his way to victory by teaming up against him (playing cards to add to his Perp's die rolls). Similarly, it is also possible for players to team up against a player who is behind, so that the poor fellow doesn't stand a chance of catching up.

One major rule problem needs to be clarified. The rule reads: "Immediately [after?] an Action Card has taken effect, it is placed on the discard pile. Those affecting combat are not carried through to the next Arrest Round, even if there was a stand-off." [A stand-off occurs when Arrest calculations result in a tie.] It is not clear from this passage what "carried

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through" means. That is, does a player lose his cards (discard them) after a tie? Does a player lose his cards if another player interrupts his Arrest attempt by playing a card that moves the crime and the perpetrator to another sector?

Judge Dredd is a game of average complexity for players of ages 8 to adult. It captures the flavor of the theme, principally because of the appealing artwork and the descriptions on the Action Cards. But would-be buyers should be aware that

it takes no brainpower to play this game. *Judge Dredd* is fun, but other games are fun and have more going for them as well. In the right situation, with the right group of people, I might play it again.

— Reviewed by Michael Gray

Federation Space: The final frontier?

Task Force Games has been around for a few years now, and has become a noted game publishing company. Most of TFG's games have been either science fiction or fantasy in nature. Standing at the top of the line (or near it, depending on your point of view) is the Task Force treatment of the very popular *Star Trek* universe as manifested in *Starfleet Battles* and its expansion kits. This super-detailed tactical game pits individual starships, of a variety of types, classes and races, against one another in a number of imaginative situations.

Expanding on that treatment of the *Star Trek* milieu, Task Force also boasts a strategic game called *FEDERATION SPACE*. While it deals with the same general subject, *Federation Space* is at the opposite end of the spectrum from *Starfleet Battles*. Where the latter centers more on battles, tactics, and starship performance, *Federation Space* addresses wars, strategy (in the Clausewitzian sense of employing battles to achieve a political end), and the management of fleets of spacecrafts. So the two games complement one another, a relationship further strengthened by tie-in rules that provide for using the *SFB* rules to handle the battles set up by maneuvers on the *FS* map. This "linkability" is sure to please many *SFB* players, who are likely to regard *Federation Space* as the strategic module for the former game. But this also should not serve to scare off those players who have never had the time to work through the complexities of *SFB*; *Federation Space* is a wholly suitable and playable game on its own.

First of all, what do you get for your

fifteen bucks? *Federation Space's* components include a 20" by 24" map sheet, 432 backprinted counters, fleet organization charts, a tactical display, a combat results table, and a 16-page rule book. The map is a real beauty. It is a white hexgrid overlaid on a black field, with a nice use of color for major systems, base stations and starbases. Borders are in red, and there is even the infamous Neutral Zone, between the Federation and the Klingons and Romulans, that played a part in a number of the TV show scripts. The map covers the major areas of seven political groupings: the Federation, Romulans, Klingons, Kzintis, Gorns, Tholians, and Hydrans. Some distortion of "real space" has occurred in the map preparation, but this is an aid to playability.

The counters are very attractive, with a nice use of color and ship silhouettes to denote race and ship class. Each counter gives the attack, defense and movement factors of the ship. Nearly all the counters are backprinted, the flip sides showing reduced values in a simplified step-reduction system. My only caveat about the counters is their die-cutting; there are some irregularities, with some counters being either larger or smaller than normal, though nothing that seriously hampers their utility. The rule book is nicely organized and printed, and notably free of typos and misuses of language.

The mechanics of *Federation Space* are very straightforward and easy to understand, making for a quick-playing, action-oriented game. There's no terrain to hamper movement, and nearly all ships move at the "warp speed" of six hexes. The only impediment to ships'

movement is other ships; all vessels have a zone of control, and non-phasing ships may intercept ships moving into their ZOC — an important tactic in the game.

The combat system is similarly uncomplicated. To give the battles something of a tactical flavor, a combat display is utilized. This has seven boxes per side (maximum stacking per side is six, but some ships can carry fighters) and a reserve. Ships are allocated to the boxes and paired off for combat purposes. Attacks are resolved with results of no effect, damaged (flip the target to its reduced-strength side, or remove it if already damaged), and destroyed. The CRT is bloody, with a decent chance to damage even on some "minus" columns. Battles continue until one side is destroyed or disengages; continuing a fight can be a risky proposition, especially with damaged ships. Advanced and optional rules add to the combat system by allowing for such things as ship capture, combat range, and Romulan special weapons (including, of course, the cloaking device).

The rules also address more strategic concerns. Systems are very often the object of scenarios; they are given combat factors and, abstracted rules are provided for their capture and control. Base stations (defensive strongpoints) and starbases (military and repair centers) are also dealt with. The game offers both a simple repair system and an advanced set of economics rules, the latter being a more satisfying way of dealing with the topic. It introduces a simple system of economic points, produced by controlled systems, which are spent on the repair and rebuilding of starships. In keeping with the rest of the rules, the economics section is straightforward and easy to implement. At the same time, it adds quite a bit to the play of most of the scenarios.

Federation Space has ten scenarios, ranging from a three-turn Klingon incursion into Tholian territory to a long scenario, involving all of the races and political groups, chronicling the First Intra-Galactic-War. The campaign game allows the players, one for each race, to play out a diplomatic free-for-all, creating and dissolving alliances at will.

All of the scenarios, save the last mentioned, use fleet organization charts, one of the game's more clever innovations. These charts provide instant orders of battle for the scenarios by listing the

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ships assigned to guard the borders with hostile or potentially hostile races. Ships assigned to non-combat areas are usually required to stay on station and are only released under special circumstances, such as the fall of a starbase, the loss of a large number of systems, or an attack on the home world. This rule prevents the larger "empires," like the Klingons or the Federation, from overwhelming smaller opponents with their superior forces.

When one reviews a historical war-game, it is appropriate to test the game for its authenticity and faithfulness to the subject matter. This is a moot exercise in the case of most SF games, but perhaps not so in the case of any game set in the Star Trek milieu, about which much has been written. The people responsible for FS point out the great pains they took to insure faithfulness to the TV show and other sources. Some modifications were made in the map to facilitate playability, but this sort of "tampering" with the original source makes sense. Many of the ship types in the game are derived from little more than conjecture and inference, and are holdovers from *Starfleet Battles*. A similar case is true with the inclusion of Kzinti (taken from Larry Niven's work, particularly his *Ringworld* novels) as one of the game's major races.

This game has a number of things I like. It's simple enough to play with ease but complicated enough that it remains

interesting. I like the step-reduction system and the inclusion of lots of "chrome" rules that add to the game's play and help to create a nice feel for the topic. The game's components are colorful, functional and attractive.

And, it has a few things I don't like. The restricted nature of some of the borders and the large number of ships, coupled with the interception rule, sometimes cause the scenarios to play more like a land game than a naval game (to which one would expect the game to be more analogous). Maneuver and indirect approaches are not often rewarded; battle reigns supreme, and fleet-vs.-fleet slug-fests are often the rule. Disengaging from a battle is difficult if the withdrawing ships are damaged — and costly, since disengaging ships cannot fire. (We found that the simple change of allowing ships attempting to withdraw to fire at pursuing ships if they fail to escape made disengagement a viable battle tactic for losing fleets.)

In total, *Federation Space* has much to recommend itself. Both those who play *Starfleet Battles* and those interested in a fast-moving, action-oriented strategic space game should find this title to their liking. The game, designed by Stephen G. Wilcox, is available through retail sale only and can be found in many game and hobby stores.

— Reviewed by Tony Watson

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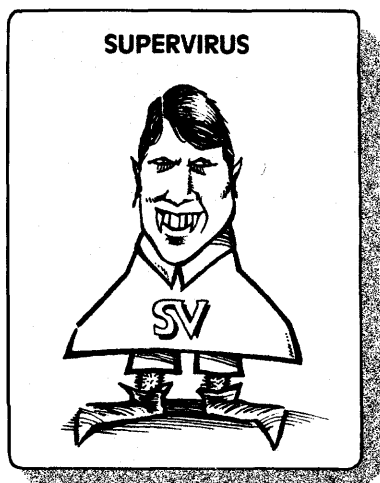
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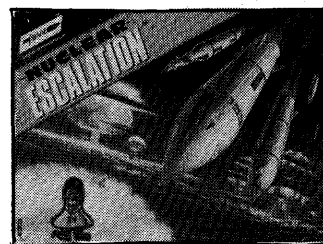
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Another view of *Dragonmaster*

In issue #73 of DRAGON® Magazine, Glenn Rahman reviewed the card game *Dragonmaster*™. After a very complimentary description of the components and a summation of the rules, he labeled the game "bland and simplistic." He then went on to say that "as a game in itself, *Dragonmaster* cannot be recommended."

Before I go any further, let me disqualify myself as an objective reviewer of this game; I helped bring it to life when I worked at Milton Bradley.

The original game was named *Coup d'Etat*, a Parker Brothers game that had gone out of print. The inventor did not submit it to Milton Bradley; he gave me one of his personal copies for my collection. I liked it so much that I finally convinced MB to bring it out with a different look and a different theme.

Now, what's so special about the game? Well, as Glenn stated in his review, the components are of the highest quality. The oversized cards were printed on the best card stock we could buy. A great deal of time, money, and talent went into the artwork. Each card is wonderfully different. To quote Glenn: "The colors are rich; the detail and poses are imaginative, powerful, and evocative."

But there's more to those cards than meets the eye. I specifically asked for the borders around each index (K for King, W for Wizard, etc.) to be different in shape. I wanted the game to be playable in dim light — by campfire or candlelight.

The black drawstring bag was added so that the game could be tucked away in a knapsack, and so that the colorful jewels could be stored in a pouch rather than in the bottom of a box. The plastic "magic crystals" utilized the molds for Milton Bradley's *Laser Attack*™ game. We looked everywhere for a substitute for the money used in *Coup d'Etat*. We got samples of beads, buttons, and baubles in plastic, metal, and glass. We even considered using unnumbered gem dice. But we finally settled on the functional laser pods. The pods fit together nicely, making the jewels easy to store and easy to keep track of during play.

Now, about the rules. We broke the original rules for *Coup d'Etat* into three sections: Basic, Advanced, and Expert, for the simple purpose of making the game easy to learn. The basic game explains the five "hands." Each hand has its own individual objective. One player deals the five different hands, and then the deal passes to the left. The order in which the five hands are played is determined by the dealer after he looks at his cards.

The object of each hand, in the basic game, is to try to *not* take certain cards or tricks. Whoever takes any of these cards or tricks must pay the dealer. So, the other players are all trying to get the dealer (who called the hand) to take the penalty cards or tricks, and thus get no income from them. The five hands are these:

1. Don't take the first or last trick.
2. Don't take the Prince of Warriors (equivalent to a standard Queen).
3. Don't take any Dragonlords (one card in each of the four suits).
4. Don't take any Wizards (equivalent to a standard Jack).
5. Don't take any of the above.

One problem with the basic game is that the last dealer often runs out of funds (crystals) before it is his turn to deal. He has spent the game, up to that point, paying other dealers for penalty cards he has taken. That is why the "power play" is introduced in the advanced game — to spread the wealth around!

The Dragon card is added to the deck for the advanced game, and is used in the power play rules. The holder of the Dragon card may attempt a power play, or else must discard the Dragon card in favor of the bottom card of the deck, which is set face down off to the side after the deal is completed. If the Dragon card is turned in, the dealer chooses the hand as usual, and play proceeds as in the basic

game. If the holder of the Dragon card tries a power play, then the Dragon card becomes a powerful wild card.

The object of a power play is the opposite of all the usual hands. For example: "Try to take both the first and last tricks, try to take all the Dragonlords," and so forth. The player who makes a successful power play gets a lot more (in crystals) from the other players than the dealer would have received for a normal hand — and the successful power player becomes the dealer for the rest of the current round.

Glenn made only one real error in his review. He said that "Unfortunately, power plays of any type are so hard to bring off successfully that they are seldom attempted." This is not true, and the statement leads me to believe that either Glenn did not play the advanced game, or he played with non-card players. *Dragonmaster* is a card player's game. Some power plays are hard; others are relatively easy. For example, if a player is dealt the Dragon card and at least one King, he can probably lead the King to win the first trick and then play the Dragon to win the last trick. This power play, in particular, is easy — and it happens frequently in the game.

The expert game introduces some restrictions on leading to a trick, and describes the "secret power play." This permits a player to attempt a power play even if he was not dealt the Dragon.


At the back of the rules booklet are six specially selected hands played out in detailed examples. They are laid out bridge-style and can be set up and played out, trick by trick. Regular hands, power plays, and secret power plays are all illustrated there. The game also comes with four information cards to help, players remember the sequence of cards and the payoffs for each hand.

The appeal of the game is that, unlike most card games, the dealer chooses the game *after* he looks at his hand. *Dragonmaster* is not "bland" or "simplistic," as Glenn calls it. As a card game, it is full of surprises and strategies. If it is simple, then so is contract bridge!

Finally, to address Glenn's statement that "it would have been far better had the designers tried to work some fantasy features into the course of play": We kept the design intact because the game is complex enough without adding duels, quests, and heroics. The story line and background give the game a medieval "feel" and an excuse for the elegance of the components.

Just as one should not judge a book (or a game) by its cover, neither should one judge a game (or book) by one review.

— Reviewed by Michael Gray



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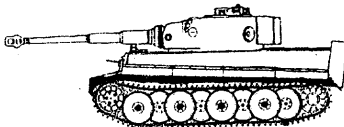
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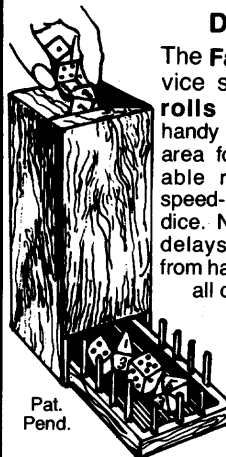
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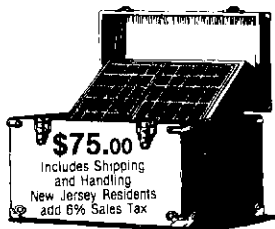
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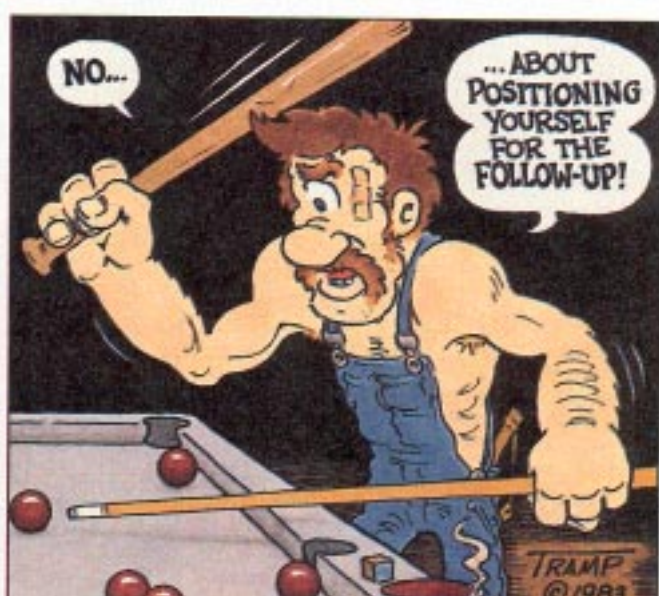
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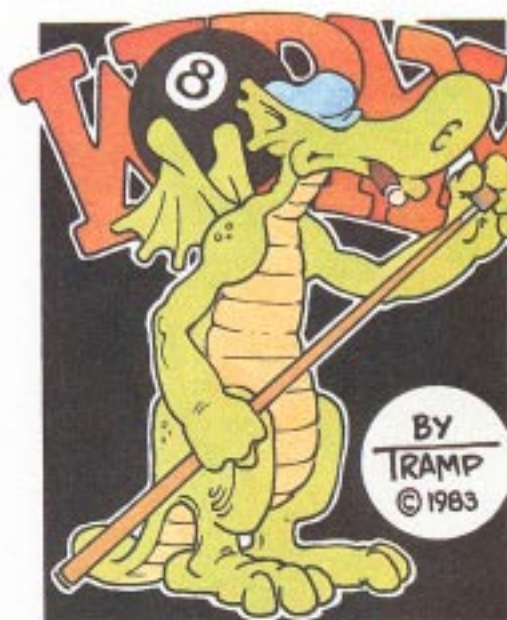
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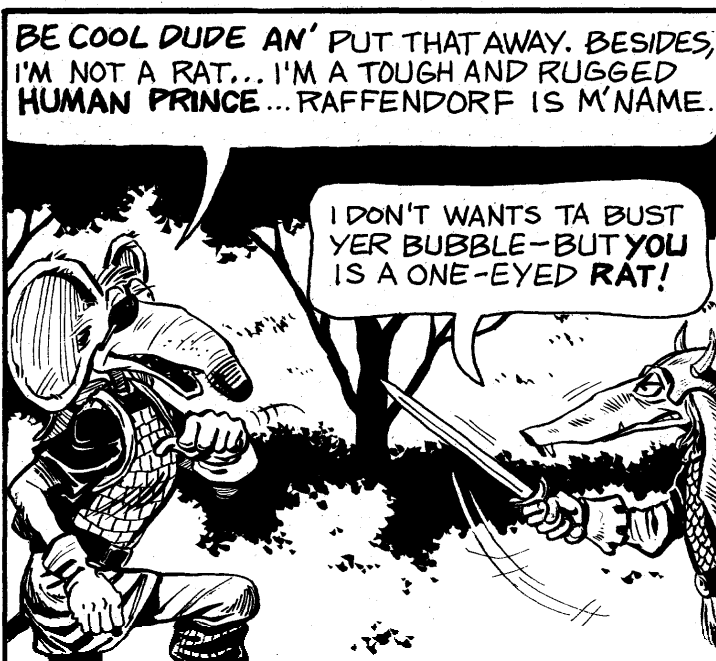
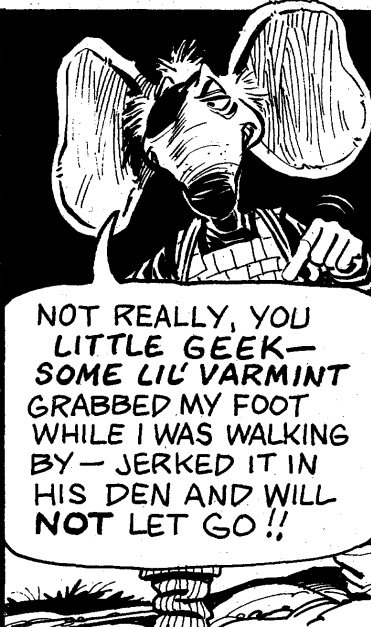
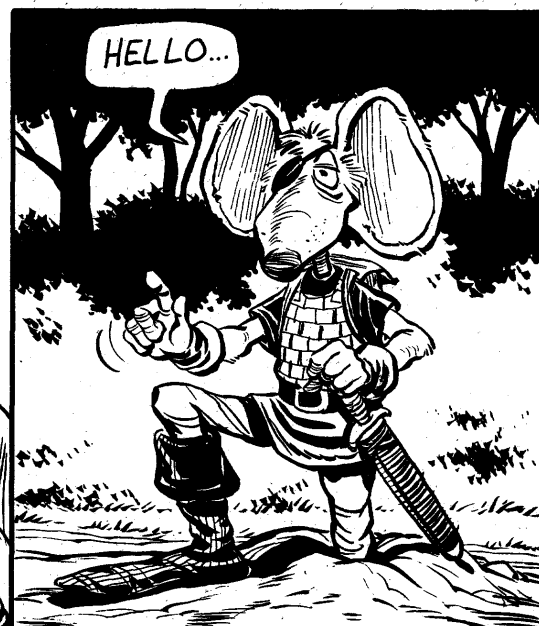
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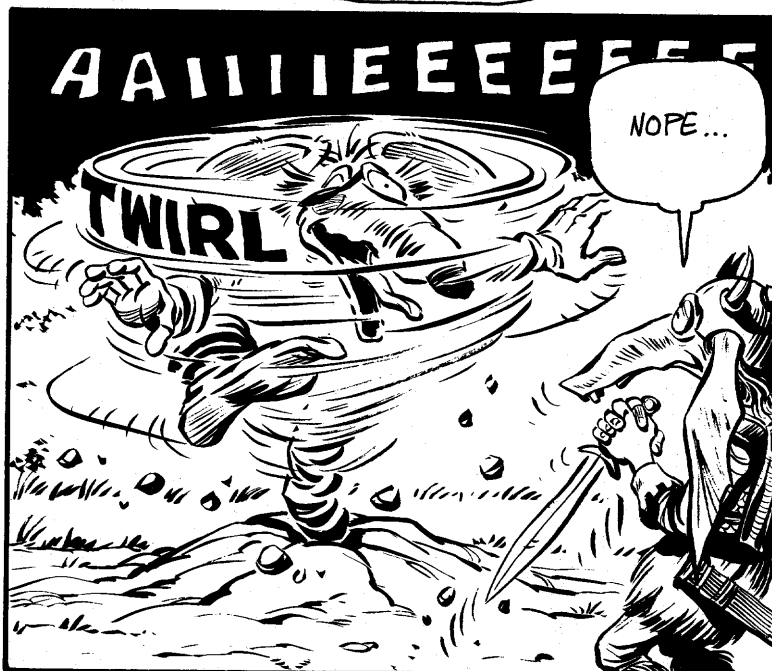
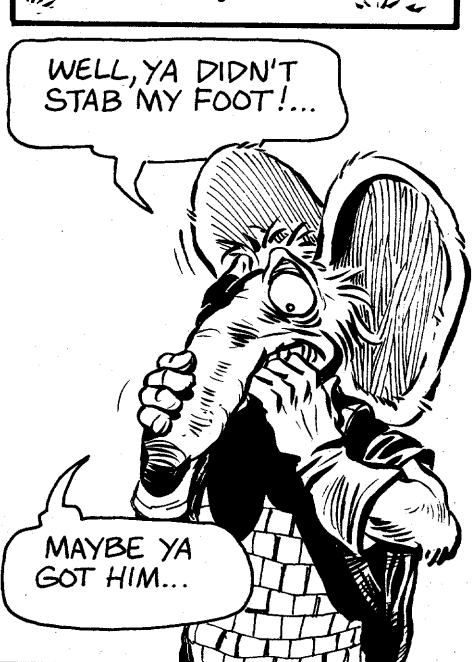
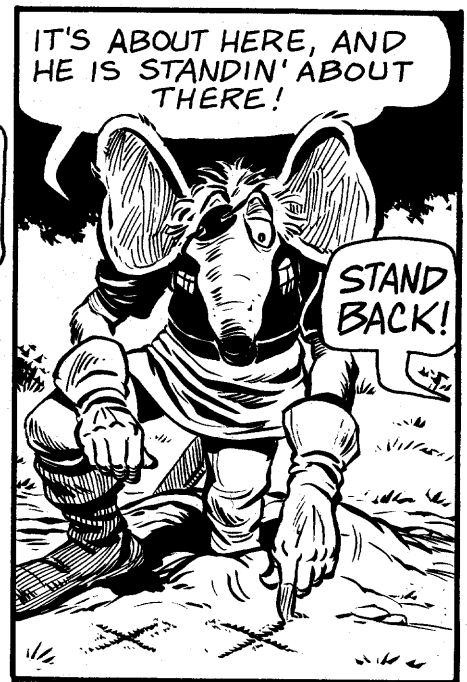
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IT STARTED OUT AS A HALFLING...

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"BEST DIORAMA" GOES TO AL DUESTER AND LARRY CARMODY FOR THEIR "GULLIVER AND THE LILLIPUTIANS". I MUST SAY MR. CARMODY—YOU MUST BE VERY DEDICATED TO DO THIS ALL DAY.

WELL, I THOT IT WAS WORTH IT—TO SPLIT A 60 DOLLAR CASH PRIZE!

CASH PRIZE? WE'RE NOT GIVING OUT A CASH PRIZE.

WHAT?!

I WASN'T GOING TO TELL HIM 'TILL AFTER THE CON.

PAINTING MINIATURES—HOW USELESS. CAN YOU THINK OF A MORE IMPRACTICAL WASTE OF TIME AND MONEY?!

HOW ABOUT THAT 65 FOOT-TALL DRAGON YOU'VE BEEN MAKING OUT OF BEER CANS FOR THE LAST 2 YEARS?

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WARRIOR CHANGE ALIGNMENT

KAZZOR

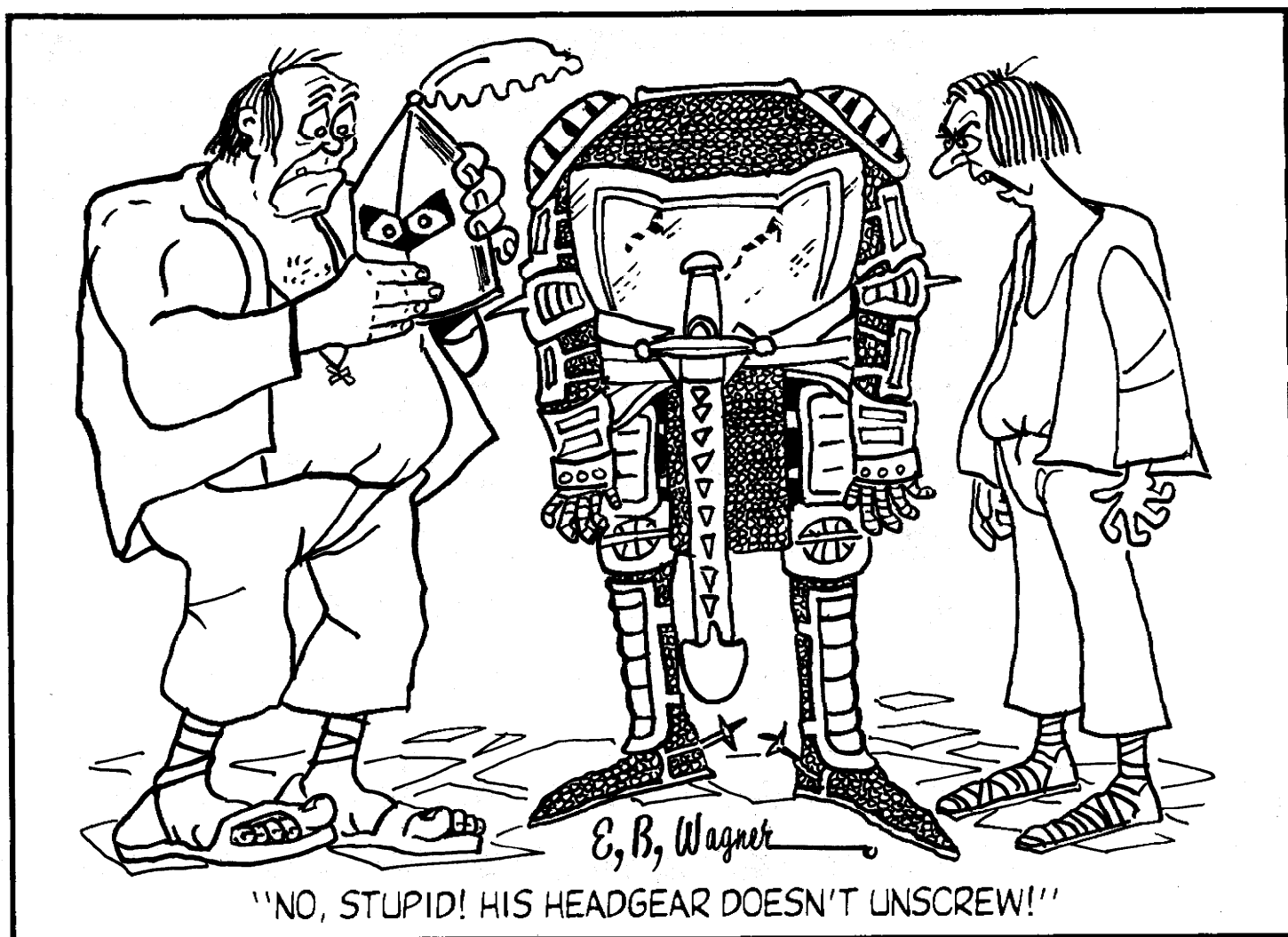
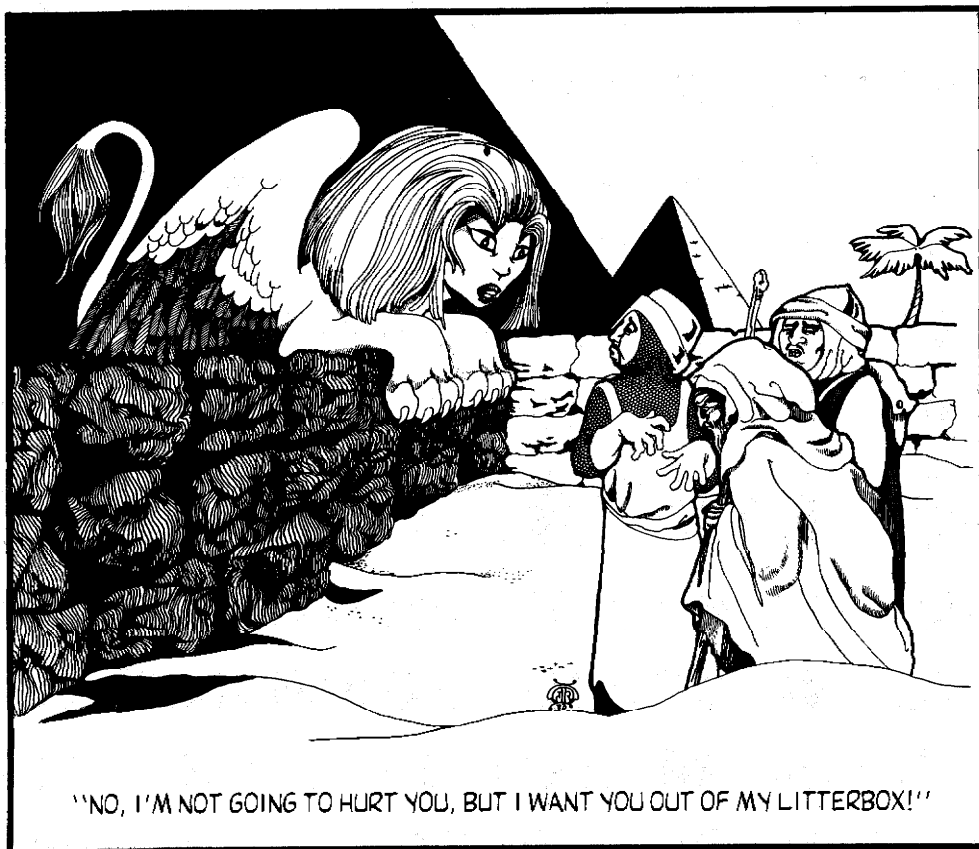
SENATOR! THE BUYING GAME

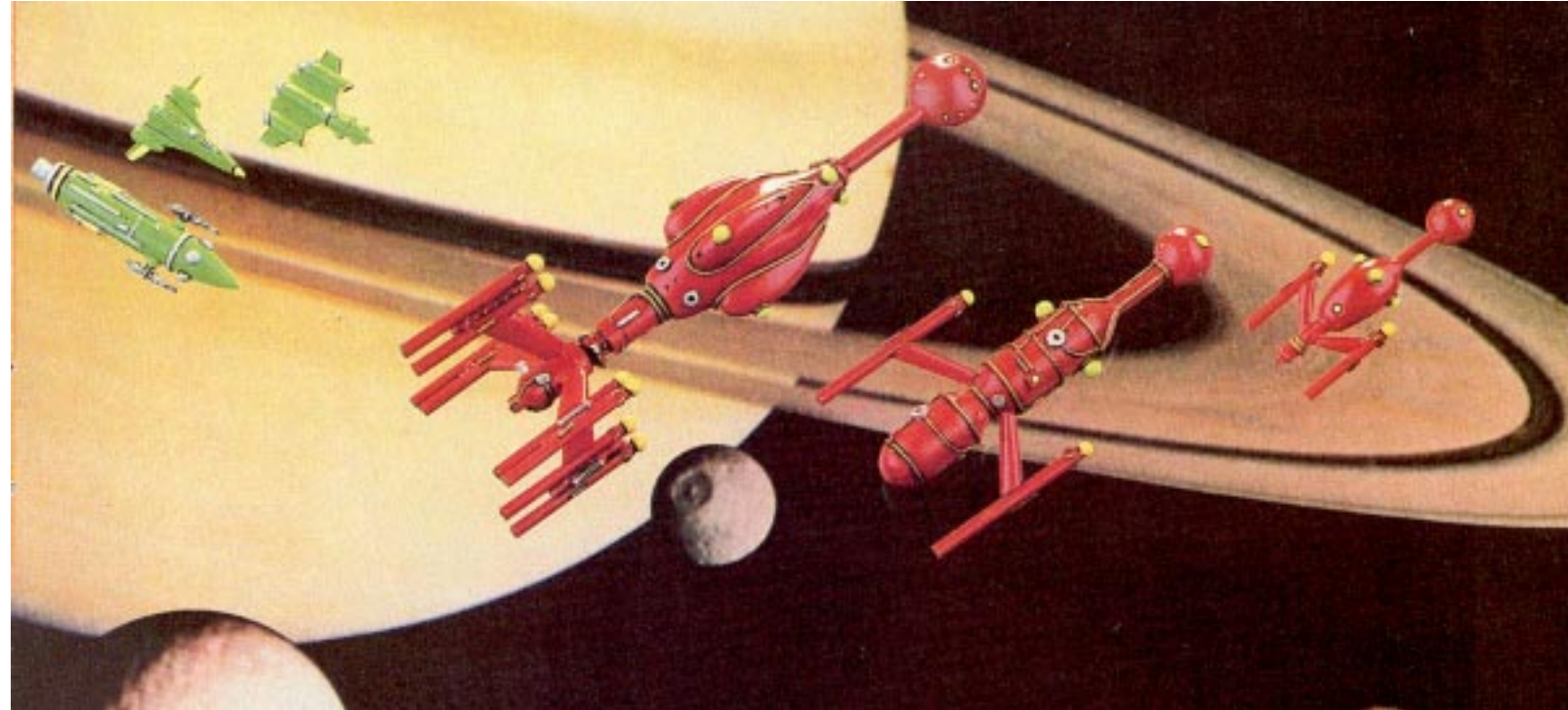
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